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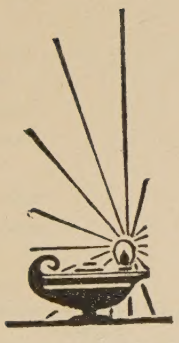

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AN INCIDENT IN THE PILGRIMAGE OF ULENSPIEGEL

ULENSPIEGEL as he pilgrimaged would gladly have turned highway robber, but he found the stones too heavy to carry.

He was trudging by chance on the road to Audenaerde where there was then a garrison of Flemish *reiters* charged with the defence of the town against the French bands that ravaged the country like locusts.

The *reiters* had at their head a certain captain, a Frisian born, by name Kornjuin. They also overran the low country and pillaged the peoples, who were thus, as usual, devoured on both sides.

Everything was good in their eyes: hens, chickens, ducks, pigeons, calves, and pigs. One day, as they were coming back laden with plunder, Kornjuin and his lieutenants saw at the foot of a tree Ulenspiegel lying asleep and dreaming of fricassees.

"What do you do for a living?" asked Kornjuin.

"I'm dying of hunger," replied Ulenspiegel.

"What is your trade?"

"To go on pilgrimage for my sins, look on

at others toiling, dance on the rope, paint pretty faces, carve knife handles, play the *rommel-pot,* and blow the trumpet."

Now if Ulenspiegel spoke so bold of trumpets, it was because he had learned that the post of watchman to the Castle of Audenaerde was vacant after the death of an old man who had held it.

Korjuin said to him:

"You shall be trumpeter to the town."

Ulenspiegel went with him and was posted on the tallest tower on the ramparts, in a little box of a cell well ventilated by the four winds, all except the south wind that fanned it only with one wing.

He was enjoined to sound the trumpet as soon as he might see an enemy coming and, to that end, to keep his head clear and his eyes keen; and so they did not give him overmuch either to eat or to drink.

The captain and his soldiers stayed in the tower and feasted there all day long at the expense of the low country. There was killed and eaten there more than one capon whose one crime was to be plump. Ulenspiegel, always forgotten and forced to be satisfied with his meagre soup, found no pleasure in the smell of the sauces. The French came and carried off a great deal of cattle; Ulenspiegel did not sound his trumpet.

Korjuin climbed up to his cell and said to him:

"Why did you not sound the trumpet?"

Ulenspiegel said to him:

"I give you no thanks for your provender."

The next day, the captain ordered a great feast for himself and his soldiers, but Ulenspiegel was still forgotten. They were on the point of beginning to gorge, when Ulenspiegel blew his trumpet.

Kornjuin and his soldiers, thinking it was the French, left their wines and meats, leapt upon their horses, rode hastily out of the town, but found nothing in the country but an ox chewing the cud in the sun, and brought him back with them.

Meanwhile, Ulenspiegel had filled himself with wines and meats. The captain as he returned saw him standing, smiling, and his legs tottering at the door of the feast hall. He said to him:

"It is traitor's work to sound the alarm when you do not see the enemy, and not to sound it when you do see them."

"Master captain," said Ulenspiegel. "I am in my tower so puffed and swollen up with the four winds that I could float like a bladder if I had not blown in my trumpet to ease me. Have me hanged now, or another time when you need an ass's skin for your drums."

Kornjuin went away without a word.

Meanwhile, news came to Audenaerde that the gracious Emperor Charles was about to come to

the town, with a most noble company. On this occasion the sheriffs gave Ulenspiegel a pair of spectacles that he might better discern His Sacred Majesty's coming. Ulenspiegel was to blow three blasts on the trumpet as soon as he saw the Emperor marching upon Luppeghem, which is a quarter of a league away from the Borgpoort.

Thus the townsfolk would have time to ring their bells, to make ready fireworks, to put the meats in the oven, and to broach the hogsheads.

One day, towards noon, the wind was blowing from Brabant and the sky was clear: Ulenspiegel saw on the road leading to Luppeghem a great band of horsemen mounted on caracoling steeds, the long feathers in their caps streaming in the wind. Some carried banners. He who rode proudly at their head wore a bonnet of cloth of gold with great plumes. He was arrayed in brown velvet broidered with brocatel.

Ulenspiegel put on his spectacles and saw it was the Emperor Charles the Fifth who was coming to give the folk of Audenaerde permission to serve him their choicest wines and their choicest viands.

His whole band was moving leisurely, snuffing up the fresh air that awakens appetite, but Ulenspiegel thought that they made good cheer by custom and might very well fast for one day

without perishing. So he looked on at them as they came and did not blow his trumpet.

They came on laughing and talking freely, whilst His Sacred Majesty looked into his stomach to see if there was enough room for the dinner of the Audenaerde folk. He appeared surprised and displeased that no bell rang to announce his coming.

At this juncture a peasant entered the town running, to announce that he had seen a French band riding in the neighbourhood marching upon the town to devour and pillage everything.

At this word the porter fastened the gate and sent a servant of the commune to warn the other porters of the town. But the *reiters* feasted without knowing anything.

His Majesty was still coming on, annoyed not to hear bells and cannon and arquebuses sounding and thundering and volleying. Straining his ears in vain, he heard nothing but the chime marking the half hour. He arrived before the gate, found it shut and beat on it with his fist to have it opened.

And the lords in his retinue, angry like him, muttered sour speeches. The porter who was on the summit of the ramparts cried out to them that if they did not put an end to this hubbub he would spray them with grapeshot to cool their impatience.

But His Majesty in a fury:

"Blind hog," said he, "dost thou not know thy Emperor?"

The porter answered:

That the least hoggish are not always the most gilded; that he knew, besides, that the French were good mockers by their nature, since the Emperor Charles, at this moment waging war in Italy, could not be at the gates of Audenaerde.

Thereupon Charles and the lords cried out the more, saying:

"If thou dost not open, we shall roast thee on the point of a spear. And thou shalt eat thy keys first and foremost."

At the noise they were making, an old man-at-arms came out from the artillery room and showing his nose above the wall:

"Porter," said he, "you are all wrong, it is our Emperor yonder; I know him well, though he has aged since he took Maria Van de Gheynst from here to the Castle of Lallaing."

The porter fell down stiff as death with terror, and the man-at-arms seized the keys and went to open the gate.

The Emperor asked why he had been forced to wait so long: the man-at-arms having told him, His Majesty ordered him to shut the gate again, and to fetch him the *reiters* of Kornjuin, whom he commanded to march before him beating their tambourines and playing their fifes.

Soon one by one the bells awoke to sound full peal. Thus preceded, His Majesty came with an imperial din to the Great Marketplace. The burgomasters and sheriffs were all assembled there; the sheriff Ian Guigelaar came out at the noise. He went back into the council chamber saying:

"*Keyser Karel is alhier!* The Emperor Charles is here!"

Sorely affrighted to hear these tidings, the burgomasters, sheriffs, and councillors came out from the Townhall to go in a body to greet the Emperor, while their men ran throughout the whole town to have the fireworks got ready, to put the chickens to the fire, and to broach the casks.

Men, women, and children ran everywhere crying:

"*Keyser Karel is op't groot marckt!* The Emperor is in the Great Market!"

Ere long great was the crowd at the square.

The Emperor, in deep anger, asked the two burgomasters if they did not deserve to be hanged for thus failing in respect to their sovereign.

The burgomasters replied that they deserved hanging indeed, but that Ulenspiegel, the trumpeter of the tower, deserved it much more, seeing that upon the rumour of His Majesty's coming he had been stationed there, equipped with a good pair of barnacles, with express instructions that

he should sound his trumpet three times as soon as he should see the imperial convoy approaching. But he had done nothing of this.

The Emperor, still angry, asked them to send for Ulenspiegel.

"Why," said he, "having such clear spectacles, didst thou not blow a point on the trumpet at my coming?"

So saying, he passed his hand over his eyes, because of the brightness of the sun, and looked at Ulenspiegel.

Ulenspiegel also passed his hand over his eyes, and replied that since he had seen His Sacred Majesty looking between his fingers, he had no longer desired to make use of the spectacles.

The Emperor told him he was to be hanged, the town porter said it was well done, and the burgomasters were so terrified at this sentence that they made no word of answer, neither to approve it nor to oppose it.

The executioner and his assistants were sent for. They came carrying a ladder and a new rope, seized Ulenspiegel by the collar, as he walked in front of Kornjuin's hundred *reiters,* keeping very quiet and saying his prayers. But they mocked him bitterly.

The people who were following him said:

"It is a great cruelty to put to death a poor young man in this way for so small a fault."

And the weavers were there in great numbers and under arms, and they said:

"We shall not leave Ulenspiegel to be hanged: it is contrary to the law of Audenaerde."

By now they were come to the gallows field, Ulenspiegel was hoisted up on the ladder, and the executioner put the rope on him. The weavers flocked up around the gallows. The provost was there on horseback, resting the rod of justice on his horse's shoulder, the wand wherewith at the Emperor's word he should give the signal for the execution.

All the assembled people cried out:

"Mercy, mercy for Ulenspiegel!"

Ulenspiegel upon his ladder said:

"Pity! gracious Emperor!"

The Emperor lifted his hand and said:

"If this rascal asks me for something I cannot do, he shall have his life!"

"Speak, Ulenspiegel," cried the people.

The women wept and said:

"He can ask for nothing, poor fellow, for the Emperor can do all things."

And all said:

"Speak, Ulenspiegel!"

"Sacred Majesty," said Ulenspiegel, "I shall ask thee neither for money, nor for lands, nor for life, but only one thing, for which you must not, if I dare say it, have me whipped nor laid

on the rack, before I depart to the land of spirits."

"I promise thee this," said the Emperor.

"Majesty," said Ulenspiegel, "I ask that before I be hanged, you shall come and kiss the mouth with which I speak no Flemish."

The Emperor, laughing like all the people, replied:

"I cannot do what thou dost ask, and thou shalt not hang, Ulenspiegel."

But he condemned the burgomasters and sheriffs to wear spectacles on the back of their heads for six months, in order, said he, that if the Audenaerde folk do not see in front, they may at least see behind.

And by imperial decree, these spectacles are still seen in the arms of the town.

And Ulenspiegel went away modestly, with a little bag of money the women had given him.

CHARLES DE COSTER.

THE FORTY-SEVEN RONINS*

AT THE beginning of the Eighteenth Century there lived a daimio, called Asano Takumi no Kami, the Lord of the Castle of Akô in the province of Harima. Now it happened that an Imperial ambassador from the Court of the Mikado, having been sent to the Shogun at Yedo, Takumi no Kami and another noble called Kamei Sama, were appointed to receive and feast the envoy; and a high official, named Kira Kôtsuké no Suké, was named to teach them the proper ceremonies to be observed upon the occasion. The two nobles were accordingly forced to go daily to the castle to listen to the instructions of Kôtsuké no Suké. But this Kôtsuké no Suké was a man greedy of money, and as he deemed that the presents which the two daimios, according to time-honoured custom, had brought him in return for his instruction, were mean and unworthy, he conceived a great hatred against them, and took no pains in teaching them, but on the contrary rather sought to make laughing-stocks of them. Takumi no Kami, restrained by a stern sense of duty, bore his insults with patience,

* Unknown: Japanese. By permission of Macmillan & Co.

but Kamei Sama, who had less control over his temper, was violently incensed and determined to kill Kôtsuké no Suké.

One night when his duties at the castle were ended, Kamei Sama returned to his own palace, and having summoned his councillors to a secret conference, said to them: "Kôtsuké no Suké has insulted Takumi no Kami and myself during our service in attendance on the Imperial envoy. This is against all decency, and I was minded to kill him on the spot; but I bethought me that if I did such a deed within the precincts of the castle, not only would my own life be forfeit, but my family and vassals would be ruined: so I stayed my hand. Still the life of such a wretch is a sorrow to the people, and to-morrow when I go to Court I will slay him: my mind is made up, and I will listen to no remonstrance." And as he spoke his face became livid with rage.

Now one of Kamei Sama's councillors was a man of great judgment, and when he saw from his lord's manner that remonstrance would be useless he said: "Your lordship's words are law; your servant will make all preparations accordingly; and to-morrow, when your lordship goes to Court, if this Kôtsuké no Suké should again be insolent, let him die the death." And his lord was pleased at this speech, and waited with impatience for the day to break, that he might return to Court and kill his enemy.

But the councillor went home, and was much troubled, and thought anxiously about what his prince had said. And as he reflected, it occurred to him that since Kôtsuké no Suké had the reputation of being a miser he would certainly be open to a bribe, and that it was better to pay any sum, no matter how great, than that his lord and his house should be ruined. So he collected all the money he could, and, giving it to his servants to carry, rode off in the night to Kôtsuké no Suké's palace, and said to his retainers: "My master, who is now in attendance upon the Imperial envoy, owes much thanks to my Lord Kôtsuké no Suké, who has been at so great pains to teach him the proper ceremonies to be observed during the reception of the Imperial envoy. This is but a shabby present which he has sent by me, but he hopes that his lordship will condescend to accept it, and commends himself to his lordship's favour." And, with these words, he produced a thousand ounces of silver for Kôtsuké no Suké, and a hundred ounces to be distributed among his retainers.

When the latter saw the money their eyes sparkled with pleasure, and they were profuse in their thanks; and, begging the councillor to wait a little, they went and told their master of the lordly present which had arrived with a polite message from Kamei Sama. Kôtsuké no Suké in eager delight sent for the councillor into an inner

chamber, and after thanking him, promised on the morrow to instruct his master carefully in all the different points of etiquette. So the councillor seeing the miser's glee rejoiced at the success of his plan; and having taken his leave returned home in high spirits. But Kamei Sama, little thinking how his vassal had propitiated his enemy, lay brooding over his vengeance, and on the following morning at daybreak went to Court in solemn procession.

When Kôtsuké no Suké met him his manner had completely changed, and nothing could exceed his courtesy. "You have come early to Court this morning, my Lord Kamei," said he. "I cannot sufficiently admire your zeal. I shall have the honour to call your attention to several points of etiquette to-day. I must beg your lordship to excuse my previous conduct, which must have seemed very rude; but I am naturally of a cross-grained disposition, so I pray you to forgive me." And as he kept on humbling himself and making fair speeches, the heart of Kamei Sama was gradually softened, and he renounced his intention of killing him. Thus, by the cleverness of his councillor, was Kamei Sama, with all his house, saved from ruin.

Shortly after this Takumi no Kami, who had sent no present, arrived at the castle, and Kôtsuké no Suké turned him into ridicule even more than before, provoking him with sneers and covered

insults; but Takumi no Kami affected to ignore all this, and submitted himself patiently to Kôtsuké no Suké's orders.

This conduct, so far from producing a good effect, only made Kôtsuké no Suké despise him the more, until at last he said haughtily: "Here, my Lord of Takumi, the ribbon of my sock has come untied; be so good as to tie it up for me."

Takumi no Kami, although burning with rage at the affront, still thought that as he was on duty he was bound to obey, and tied up the ribbon of the sock. Then Kôtsuké no Suké, turning from him, petulantly exclaimed: "Why, how clumsy you are! You cannot so much as tie up the ribbon of a sock properly! Anyone can see that you are a boor from the country, and know nothing of the manners of Yedo." And with a scornful laugh he moved towards an inner room.

But the patience of Takumi no Kami was exhausted; this last insult was more than he could bear.

"Stop a moment, my lord," cried he.

"Well, what is it?" replied the other. And, as he turned round, Takumi no Kami drew his dirk, and aimed a blow at his head; but Kôtsuké no Suké, being protected by the Court cap which he wore, the wound was but a scratch, so he ran away; and Takumi no Kami, pursuing him, tried a second time to cut him down, but missing his aim, struck his dirk into a pillar. At this moment

an officer, named Kajikawa Yosobei, seeing the affray, rushed up, and holding back the infuriated noble, gave Kôtsuké no Suké time to make good his escape.

Then there arose a great uproar and confusion, and Takumi no Kami was arrested and disarmed, and confined in one of the apartments of the palace under the care of the censors. A council was held, and the prisoner was given over to the safeguard of a daimio, called Tamura Ukiyô no Daibu, who kept him in close custody in his own house, to the great grief of his wife and of his retainers; and when the deliberations of the council were completed, it was decided that, as he had committed an outrage and attacked another man within the precincts of the palace, he must perform *hara kiri,* that is, commit suicide by disemboweling; his goods must be confiscated, and his family ruined. Such was the law. So Takumi no Kami performed *hara kiri,* his castle of Akô was confiscated, and his retainers, having become Rônins, some of them took service with other daimios, and others became merchants.

Now amongst these retainers was his principal councillor, a man called Oishi Kuranosuké, who with forty-six other faithful dependents formed a league to avenge their master's death by killing Kôtsuké no Suké. This Oishi Kuranosuké was absent at the castle of Akô at the time of the affray, which, had he been with his prince, would never

have occurred; for, being a wise man, he would not have failed to propitiate Kôtsuké no Suké by sending him suitable presents; while the councillor who was in attendance on the prince at Yedo was a dullard, who neglected this precaution, and so caused the death of his master and the ruin of his house.

So Oishi Kuranosuké and his forty-six companions began to lay their plans of vengeance against Kôtsuké no Suké; but the latter was so well guarded by a body of men lent to him by a daimio called Uyésugi Sama, whose daughter he had married, that they saw that the only way of attaining their end would be to throw their enemy off his guard. With this object they separated, and disguised themselves, some as carpenters or craftsmen, others as merchants; and their chief, Kuranosuké, went to Kiôto, and built a house in the quarter called Yamashina, where he took to frequenting houses of the worst repute, and gave himself up to drunkenness, and debauchery, as if nothing were further from his mind than revenge. Kôtsuké no Suké, in the meanwhile, suspecting that Takumi no Kami's former retainers would be scheming against his life, secretly sent spies to Kiôto, and caused a faithful account to be kept of all that Kuranosuké did. The latter, however, determined thoroughly to delude the enemy into a false security, went on leading a dissolute life with harlots and wine-

bibbers. One day, as he was returning home drunk from some low haunt, he fell down in the street and went to sleep, and all the passers-by laughed him to scorn. It happened that a Satsuma man saw this, and said: "Is not this Oishi Kuranosuké, who was councillor of Asano Takumi no Kami, and who, not having the heart to avenge his lord, gives himself up to women and wine? See how he lies drunk in the public street! Faithless beast! Fool and craven! Unworthy the name of a Samurai!"

And he trod on Kuranosuké's face as he slept, and spat upon him; but when Kôtsuké no Suké's spies reported all this at Yedo he was greatly relieved at the news, and felt secure from danger.

One day Kuranosuké's wife, who was bitterly grieved to see her husband lead this abandoned life, went to him and said: "My lord, you told me at first that your debauchery was but a trick to make your enemy relax in watchfulness. But indeed, this has gone too far. I pray and beseech you to put some restraint upon yourself."

"Trouble me not," replied Kuranosuké, "for I will not listen to your whining. Since my way of life is displeasing to you, I will divorce you, and you may go about your business; and I will buy some pretty young girl from one of the public-houses, and marry her for my pleasure. I am sick of the sight of an old woman like you about the house, so get you gone—the sooner the better."

So saying, he flew into a violent rage, and his wife, terror-stricken, pleaded piteously for mercy.

"Oh, my lord! unsay those terrible words! I have been your faithful wife for twenty years, and have borne you three children; in sickness and in sorrow I have been with you; you cannot be so cruel as to turn me out of doors now. Have pity! have pity!"

"Cease this useless wailing. My mind is made up, and you must go; and as the children are in my way also, you are welcome to take them with you."

When she heard her husband speak thus, in her grief she sought her eldest son, Oishi Chikara, and begged him to plead for her, and pray that she might be pardoned. But nothing would turn Kuranosuké from his purpose; so his wife was sent away, with the two younger children, and went back to her native place. But Oishi Chikara remained with his father.

The spies communicated all this without fail to Kôtsuké no Suké, and he, when he heard how Kuranosuké, having turned his wife and children out of doors and bought a concubine, was groveling in a life of drunkenness and lust, began to think that he had no longer anything to fear from the retainers of Takumi no Kami, who must be cowards, without the courage to avenge their lord. So by degrees he began to keep a less strict watch, and sent back half of the guard which had

been lent to him by his father-in-law, Uyésugi Sama. Little did he think how he was falling into the trap laid for him by Kuranosuké, who, in his zeal to slay his lord's enemy, thought nothing of divorcing his wife and sending away his children! Admirable and faithful man!

In this way Kuranosuké continued to throw dust in the eyes of his foe, by persisting in his apparently shameless conduct; but his associates all went to Yedo, and, having in their several capacities as workmen and peddlers contrived to gain access to Kôtsuké no Suké's house, made themselves familiar with the plan of the building and the arrangement of the different rooms, and ascertained the character of the inmates, who were brave and loyal men, and who were cowards; upon all of which matters they sent regular reports to Kuranosuké. And when at last it became evident from the letters which arrived from Yedo that Kôtsuké no Suké was thoroughly off his guard, Kuranosuké rejoiced that the day of vengeance was at hand; and, having appointed a trysting-place at Yedo, he fled secretly from Kiôto, eluding the vigilance of his enemy's spies. Then the forty-seven men, having laid all their plans, bided their time patiently.

It was now midwinter, the twelfth month of the year, and the cold was bitter. One night, during a heavy fall of snow, when the whole world was hushed, and peaceful men were stretched in sleep

upon the mats, the Rônins determined that no more favourable opportunity could occur for carrying out their purpose. So they took counsel together, and having divided their band into two parties, assigned to each man his post. One band, led by Oishi Kuranosuké was to attack the front gate, and the other, under his son Oishi Chikara, was to attack the rear of Kôtsuké no Suké's house; but as Chikara was only sixteen years of age, Yoshida Chiuzayémon was appointed to act as his guardian. Further it was arranged that a drum, beaten at the order of Kuranosuké, should be the signal for the simultaneous attack; and that if any one slew Kôtsuké no Suké and cut off his head he should blow a shrill whistle, as a signal to his comrades, who would hurry to the spot, and, having identified the head, carry it off to the temple called Sengakuji, and lay it as an offering before the tomb of their dead lord. Then they must report their deed to the Government, and await their sentence. To this the Rônins one and all pledged themselves. Midnight was fixed upon as the hour, and the forty-seven comrades, having made all ready for the attack, partook of a last farewell feast together, for on the morrow they must die. Then Oishi Kuranosuké addressed the band, and said:

"To-night we shall attack our enemy in his palace; his retainers will certainly resist us, and we shall be obliged to kill them. But to slay old

men and women and children is a pitiful thing; therefore, I pray you each one take great heed lest you kill a single helpless person." His comrades all applauded this speech, and so they remained, waiting for the hour of midnight to arrive.

When the appointed hour came, the Rônins set forth. The wind howled furiously, and the driving snow beat in their faces; but little cared they for wind or snow as they hurried on their road. At last they reached Kôtsuké no Suké's house, and divided themselves into two bands; and Chikara, with twenty-three men, went round to the back gate. Then four men, by means of a ladder of ropes which they hung on to the roof of the porch, effected an entry into the courtyard; and, as they saw signs that all the inmates of the house were asleep, they went into the porter's lodge where the guard slept, and, before the latter had time to recover from their astonishment, bound them. The terrified guard prayed hard for mercy, that their lives might be spared; and to this the Rônins agreed on condition that the keys of the gate should be given up; but the others tremblingly said that the keys were kept in the house of one of their officers, and that they had no means of obtaining them. Then the Rônins lost patience, and with a hammer smashed to shivers the big wooden bolt which secured the gate, and the doors flew open to the right and to the left. At

the same time Chikara and his party broke in by the back gate.

Then Oishi Kuranosuké sent a messenger to the neighbouring houses, bearing the following message: "We, the Rônins who were formerly in the service of Asano Takumi no Kami, are this night about to break into the palace of Kôtsuké no Suké, to avenge our lord. As we are neither night robbers nor ruffians, no hurt will be done to the neighbouring houses. We pray you to set your minds at rest." And as Kôtsuké no Suké was hated by his neighbours for his covetousness, they did not unite their forces to assist him. Another precaution was yet taken. Lest any of the people inside should run out to call the relations of the family to the rescue, and these coming in force should interfere with the plans of the Rônins, Kuranosuké stationed ten of his men armed with bows on the roof of the four sides of the court-yard, with orders to shoot any retainers who might attempt to leave the place. Having thus laid all his plans and posted his men, Kuranosuké with his own hand beat the drum and gave the signal for attack.

Ten of Kôtsuké no Suké's retainers, hearing the noise, woke up; and, drawing their swords, rushed into the front room to defend their master. At this moment the Rônins, who had burst open the door of the front hall, entered the same room.

Then arose a furious fight between the two parties, in the midst of which Chikara, leading his men through the garden, broke into the back of the house; and Kôtsuké no Suké, in terror of his life, took refuge, with his wife and female servants, in a closet in the verandah; while the rest of his retainers, who slept in the barrack outside the house, made ready to go to the rescue. But the Rônins who had come in by the front door, and were fighting with the ten retainers, ended by overpowering and slaying the latter without losing one of their own number; after which, forcing their way bravely towards the back rooms, they were joined by Chikara and his men, and the two bands were united in one.

By this time the remainder of Kôtsuké no Suké's men had come in, and the fight became general; and Kuranosuké, sitting on a camp-stool, gave his orders and directed the Rônins. Soon the inmates of the house perceived that they were no match for their enemy, so they tried to send out intelligence of their plight to Uyésugi Sama, their lord's father-in-law, begging him to come to the rescue with all the force at his command. But the messengers were shot down by the archers whom Kuranosuké had posted on the roof. So no help coming, they fought on in despair. Then Kuranosuké cried out with a loud voice: "Kôtsuké no Suké alone is our enemy; let someone go inside and bring him forth dead or alive!"

Now in front of Kôtsuké no Suké's private room stood three brave retainers with drawn swords. The first was Kobayashi Héhachi, the second was Waku Handaiyu, and the third was Shimidzu Ikkaku, all good men and true, and expert swordsmen. So stoutly did these men lay about them that for awhile they kept the whole of the Rônins at bay, and at one moment even forced them back. When Oishi Kuranosuké saw this, he ground his teeth with rage, and shouted to his men: "What! did not every man of you swear to lay down his life in avenging his lord, and now are you beaten back by three men? Cowards, not fit to be spoken to! To die fighting in a master's cause should be the noblest ambition of a retainer!" Then turning to his own son Chikara, he said, "Here, boy! engage those men, and if they are too strong for you, die!"

Spurred by these words, Chikara seized a spear and gave battle to Waku Handaiyu, but could not hold his ground, and backing by degrees, was driven out into the garden, where he missed his footing and slipped into a pond; but as Handaiyu, thinking to kill him, looked down into the pond, Chikara cut his enemy in the leg and caused him to fall, and then crawling out of the water dispatched him. In the meanwhile, Kobayashi Héhachi and Shimidzu Ikkaku had been killed by the other Rônins, and of all Kôtsuké no Suké's retainers not one fighting man remained, Chikara,

seeing this, went with his bloody sword in his hand into a back room to search for Kôtsuké no Suké, but he only found the son of the latter, a young lord named Kira Sahioyé, who, carrying a halberd, attacked him, but was soon wounded and fled. Thus the whole of Kôtsuké no Suké's men having been killed, there was an end of the fighting; but as yet there was no trace of Kôtsuké no Suké to be found.

Then Kuranosuké divided his men into several parties and searched the whole house, but all in vain; women and children weeping were alone to be seen. At this the forty-seven men began to lose heart in regret, that after all their toil they had allowed their enemy to escape them, and there was a moment when in their despair they agreed to commit suicide together upon the spot; but they determined to make one more effort. So Kuranosuké went into Kôtsuké no Suké's sleeping-room, and touching the quilt with his hands, exclaimed, "I have just felt the bed-clothes and they are yet warm, and so methinks that our enemy is not far off. He must certainly be hidden somewhere in the house." Greatly excited by this, the Rônins renewed their search. Now in the raised part of the room, near the place of honour, there was a picture hanging; taking down this picture, they saw that there was a large hole in the plastered wall, and on thrusting a spear in they could feel nothing beyond it. So one of the Rônins, called

Yazama Jiutarô, got into the hole, and found that on the other side there was a little courtyard, in which there stood an outhouse for holding charcoal and firewood. Looking into the outhouse, he spied something white at the further end, at which he struck with his spear, when two armed men sprang out upon him and tried to cut him down, but he kept them back until one of his comrades came up and killed one of the two men and engaged the other, while Jiutarô entered the outhouse and felt about with his spear. Again seeing something white, he struck it with his lance, when a cry of pain betrayed that it was a man; so he rushed up, and the man in white clothes, who had been wounded in the thigh, drew a dirk and aimed a blow at him. But Jiutarô wrested the dirk from him, and clutching him by the collar, dragged him out of the outhouse. Then the other Rônin came up, and they examined the prisoner attentively, and saw that he was a noble-looking man, some sixty years of age, dressed in a white satin sleeping-robe, which was stained by the blood from the thigh-wound which Jiutarô had inflicted. The two men felt convinced that this was no other than Kôtsuké no Suké, and they asked him his name, but he gave no answer, so they gave the signal whistle, and all their comrades collected together at the call; then Oishi Kuranosuké, bringing a lantern, scanned the old man's features, and it was indeed

Kôtsuké no Suké; and if further proof were wanting, he still bore a scar on his forehead where their master, Asano Takumi no Kami, had wounded him during the affray in the castle. There being no possibility of mistake, therefore Oishi Kuranosuké went down on his knees, and addressing the old man very respectfully, said:

"My lord, we are the retainers of Asano Takumi no Kami. Last year your lordship and our master quarrelled in the palace, and our master was sentenced to *hari kiri,* and his family was ruined. We have come to-night to avenge him, as is the duty of faithful and loyal men. I pray your lordship to acknowledge the justice of our purpose. And now, my lord, we beseech you to perform *hara kiri.* I myself shall have the honor to act as your second, and when, with all humility, I shall have received your lordship's head, it is my intention to lay it as an offering upon the grave of Asano Takumi no Kami."

Thus, in consideration of the high rank of Kôtsuké no Suké, the Rônins treated him with the greatest courtesy, and over and over again entreated him to perform *hara kiri.* But he crouched speechless and trembling. At last Kuranosuké, seeing that it was vain to urge him to die the death of a nobleman, forced him down, and cut off his head with the same dirk with which Asano Takumi no Kami had killed himself. Then the forty-seven comrades, elated at

having accomplished their design, placed the head in a bucket, and prepared to depart; but before leaving the house they carefully extinguished all the lights and fires in the place, lest by any accident a fire should break out and the neighbours suffer.

As they were on their way to Takanawa, the suburb in which the temple called Sengakuji stands, the day broke; and the people flocked out to see the forty-seven men, who, with their clothes and arms all blood-stained, presented a terrible appearance; and everyone praised them, wondering at their valour and faithfulness. But they expected every moment that Kôtsuké no Suké's father-in-law would attack them and carry off the head, so they determined to die nobly sword in hand. However, they reached Takanawa in safety, for Matsudaira Aki no Kami, one of the eighteen chief daimios of Japan, of whose house Asano Takumi no Kami had been a cadet, had been highly pleased when he heard of the last night's work, and he had made ready to assist the Rônins in case they were attacked. So Kôtsuké no Suké's father-in-law dared not pursue them.

At about seven in the morning they came opposite to the palace of Matsudaira Mutsu no Kami, the Prince of Sendai, and the prince hearing of it, sent for one of his councillors and said: "The retainers of Takumi no Kami have slain

their lord's enemy, and are passing this way; I am filled with admiration at their devotion, so, as they must be tired and hungry after their night's work, do you go and invite them to come in here, and set some gruel and a cup of wine before them."

So the councillor went out and said to Oishi Kuranosuké, "Sir, I am a councillor of the Prince of Sendai, and my master bids me beg you, as you must be worn out after all you have undergone, to come in and partake of such poor refreshment as we can offer you. This is my message to you from my lord."

"I thank you, sir," replied Kuranosuké. "It is very good of his lordship to trouble himself to think of us. We shall accept his kindness gratefully."

So the forty-seven Rônins went into the palace, and were feasted with gruel and wine, and all the retainers of the Prince of Sendai came and praised them.

Then Kuranosuké turned to the councillor and said, "Sir, we are truly indebted to you for this kind hospitality; but as we have still to hurry to Sengakuji, we must needs humbly take our leave." And, after returning many thanks to their hosts, they left the palace of the Prince of Sendai and hastened to Senganuji, where they were met by the abbot of the monastery, who went to the front gate to receive them, and

led them to the tomb of Takumi no Kami.

And when they came to their lord's grave they took the head of Kôtsuké no Suké, and, having washed it clean in a well hard by, laid it as an offering before the tomb. When they had done this, they engaged the priests of the temple to come and read prayers while they burnt incense; first Oishi Kuranosuké burnt incense, and then his son Oishi Chikara, and after them the other forty-five men performed the same ceremony. Then Kuranosuké, having given all the money that he had by him to the abbot, said:

"When we forty-seven men shall have performed *hara kiri,* I beg you to bury us decently. I rely upon your kindness. This is but a trifle that I have to offer; such as it is, let it be spent in masses for our souls."

And the abbot, marvelling at the faithful courage of the men, with tears in his eyes pledged himself to fulfil their wishes. So the forty-seven Rônins, with their minds at rest, waited patiently until they should receive the orders of the Government.

At last they were summoned to the Supreme Court, where the governors of Yedo and the public censors had assembled; and the sentence passed upon them was as follows: "Whereas, neither respecting the dignity of the city nor fearing the Government, having leagued your-

selves together to slay your enemy, you violently broke into the house of Kira Kôtsuké no Suké by night and murdered him, the sentence of the Court is, that, for this audacious conduct, you perform *hara kiri.*" When the sentence had been read, the forty-seven Rônins were divided into four parties, and handed over to the safe keeping of four different daimios; and sheriffs were sent to the palaces of those daimios in whose presence the Rônins were made to perform *hara kiri.* But, as from the very beginning they had all made up their minds that to this end they must come, they met their death nobly; and their corpses were carried to Sengakuji, and buried in front of the tomb of their master, Asano Takumi no Kami. And when the fame of this became noised abroad, the people flocked to pray at the graves of these faithful men.

Among those who came to pray was a Satsuma man, who, prostrating himself before the grave of Oishi Kuranosuké, said: "When I saw you lying drunk by the roadside at Yamashina, in Kiôto, I knew not that you were plotting to avenge your lord; and, thinking you to be a faithless man, I trampled on you and spat in your face as I passed. And now I have come to ask pardon and offer atonement for the insult of last year." With these words he prostrated himself again before the grave, and, drawing a dirk from his girdle, performed *hara kiri* and

died. And the chief priest of the temple, taking pity upon him, buried him by the side of the Rônins; and his tomb still remains to be seen with those of the forty-seven comrades.

This is the end of the story of the Forty-seven Rônins.

From "Tales of Old Japan"
by A. B. WITFORD.

THE PROCURATOR OF JUDÆA*

AELIUS LAMIA, born in Itay of illustrious parents, had not yet discarded the *togo prætexta* when he set out for the schools of Athens to study philosophy. Subsequently he took up his residence at Rome, and in his house on the Esquiline, amid a circle of youthful wastrels, abandoned himself to licentious courses. But being accused of engaging in criminal relations with Lepida, the wife of Sulpicius Quirinus, a man of consular rank, and being found guilty, he was exiled by Tiberius Cæsar. At that time he was just entering his twenty-fourth year. During the eighteen years that his exile, lasted he traversed Syria, Palestine, Cappadocia, and Armenia, and made prolonged visits to Antioch, Cæsarea, and Jerusalem. When, after the death of Tiberius, Caius was raised to the purple, Lamia obtained permission to return to Rome. He even regained a portion of his possessions. Adversity had taught him wisdom.

He avoided all intercourse with the wives and daughters of Roman citizens, made no efforts to-

* From "Mother of Pearl" by permission of Dodd, Mead & Co.

wards obtaining office, held aloof from public honours, and lived a secluded life in his house on the Esquiline. Occupying himself with the task of recording all the remarkable things he had seen during his distant travels, he turned, as he said, the vicissitudes of his years of expiation into a diversion for his hours of rest. In the midst of these calm employments, alternating with assiduous study of the works of Epicurus, he recognized with a mixture of surprise and vexation that age was stealing upon him. In his sixty-second year, being afflicted with an illness which proved in no slight degree troublesome, he decided to have recourse to the waters at Baiæ. The coast at that point, once frequented by the halcyon, was at this date the resort of the wealthy Roman, greedy of pleasure. For a week Lamia lived alone, without a friend in the brilliant crowd. Then one day, after dinner, an inclination to which he yielded urged him to ascend the incline, which, covered with vines that resembled bacchantes, looked out upon the waves.

Having reached the summit he seated himself by the side of a path beneath a terebinth, and let his glances wander over the lovely landscape. To his left livid and bare, the Phlegræan plain stretched out towards the ruins of Cumæ. On his right, Cape Misenum plunged its abrupt spur beneath the Tyrrhenian sea. Beneath his feet luxurious Baiæ, following the graceful out-

line of the coast, displayed its gardens, its villas thronged with statues, its porticos, its marble terraces along the shores of the blue ocean where the dolphins sported. Before him, on the other side of the bay, on the Campanian coast, gilded by the already sinking sun, gleamed the temples which far away rose above the laurels of Posilippo, whilst on the extreme horizon Vesuvius looked forth smiling.

Lamia drew from a fold of his toga a scroll containing the *Treatise upon Nature,* extended himself upon the ground, and began to read. But the warning cries of a slave necessitated his rising to allow of the passage of a litter which was being carried along the narrow pathway through the vineyards. The litter being uncurtained, permitted Lamia to see stretched upon the cushions as it was borne nearer to him the figure of an elderly man of immense bulk, who, supporting his head on his hand, gazed out with a gloomy and disdainful expression. His nose, which was aquiline, and his chin, which was prominent, seemed desirous of meeting across his lips, and his jaws were powerful.

From the first moment Lamia was convinced that the face was familiar to him. He hesitated a moment before the name came to him. Then suddenly hastening towards the litter with a display of surprise and delight—

"Pontius Pilate!" he cried. "The gods be

praised who have permitted me to see you once again!"

The old man gave a signal to the slaves to stop, and cast a keen glance upon the stranger who had addressed him.

"Pontius, my dear host," resumed the latter, "have twenty years so far whitened my hair and hollowed my cheeks that you no longer recognize your friend Ælius Lamia?"

At this name Pontius Pilate dismounted from the litter as actively as the weight of his years and the heaviness of his gait permitted him, and embraced Ælius Lamia again and again.

"Gods! what a treat it is to me to see you once more! But, alas, you call up memories of those long-vanished days when I was Procurator of Judæa in the province of Syria. Why, it must be thirty years ago that I first met you. It was at Cæsarea, whither you came to drag out your weary term of exile. I was fortunate enough to alleviate it a little, and out of friendship, Lamia, you followed me to that depressing place Jerusalem, where the Jews filled me with bitterness and disgust. You remained for more than ten years my guest and my companion, and in converse about Rome and things Roman we both of us managed to find consolation—you for your misfortunes, and I for my burdens of State."

Lamia embraced him afresh.

"You forget two things, Pontius; you are overlooking the facts that you used your influence on my behalf with Herod Antipas, and that your purse was freely open to me."

"Let us not talk of that," replied Pontius, "since after your return to Rome you sent me by one of your freedmen a sum of money which repaid me with usury."

"Pontius, I could never consider myself out of your debt by the mere payment of money. But tell me, have the gods fulfilled your desires? Are you in the enjoyment of all the happiness you deserve? Tell me about your family, your fortunes, your health."

"I have withdrawn to Sicily, where I possess estates, and where I cultivate wheat for the market. My eldest daughter, my best-beloved Pontia, who has been left a widow, lives with me, and directs my household. The gods be praised, I have preserved my mental vigour; my memory is not in the least degree enfeebled. But old age always brings in its train a long procession of griefs and infirmities. I am cruelly tormented with gout. And at this very moment you find me on my way to the Phlegræan plain in search of a remedy for my sufferings. From that burning soil, whence at night flames burst forth, proceed acrid exhalations of sulphur, which, so they say, ease the pains and restore suppleness

to the joints. At least, the physicians assure me that it is so."

"May you find it so in your case, Pontius! But, despite the gout and its burning torments, you scarcely look as old as myself, although in reality you must be my senior by ten years. Unmistakably you have retained a greater degree of vigour than I ever possessed, and I am overjoyed to find you looking so hale. Why, dear friend, did you retire from the public service before the customary age? Why, on resigning your governorship in Judæa, did you withdraw to a voluntary exile on your Sicilian estates? Give me an account of your doings from the moment that I ceased to be a witness of them. You were preparing to suppress a Samaritan rising when I set out for Cappadocia, where I hoped to draw some profit from the breeding of horses and mules. I have not seen you since then. How did that expedition succeed? Pray tell me. Everything interests me that concerns you in any way."

Pontius Pilate sadly shook his head.

"My natural disposition," he said, "as well as a sense of duty, impelled me to fulfil my public responsibilities, not merely with diligence, but even with ardour. But I was pursued by unrelenting hatred. Intrigues and calumnies cut short my career in its prime, and the fruit it

should have looked to bear has withered away. You ask me about the Samaritan insurrection. Let us sit down on this hillock. I shall be able to give you an answer in few words. Those occurrences are as vividly present to me as if they had happened yesterday.

"A man of the people, of persuasive speech—there are many such to be met with in Syria—induced the Samaritans to gather together in arms on Mount Gerizim (which in that country is looked upon as a holy place) under the promise that he would disclose to their sight the sacred vessels which in the ancient days of Evander and our father, Æneas, had been hidden away by an eponymous hero, or rather a tribal deity, named Moses. Upon this assurance the Samaritans rose in rebellion; but having been warned in time to forestall them, I dispatched detachments of infantry to occupy the mountain, and stationed cavalry to keep the approaches to it under observation.

"These measures of prudence were urgent. The rebels were already laying siege to the town of Tyrathaba, situated at the foot of Mount Gerizim. I easily dispersed them, and stifled the as yet scarcely organized revolt. Then, in order to give a forcible example with as few victims as possible, I handed over to execution the leaders of the rebellion. But you are aware, Lamia, in what strait dependence I was kept by the pro-

consul Vitellius, who governed Syria not in, but against the interests of Rome, and looked upon the provinces of the empire as territories which could be farmed out to tetrarchs. The head-men among the Samaritans, in their resentment against me, came and fell at his feet lamenting. To listen to them, nothing had been further from their thoughts than to disobey Cæsar. It was I who had provoked the rising, and it was purely in order to withstand my violence that they had gathered together round Tyrathaba. Vitellius listened to their complaints, and handing over the affairs of Judæa to his friend Marcellus, commanded me to go and justify my proceedings before the Emperor himself. With a heart overflowing with grief and resentment I took ship. Just as I approached the shores of Italy, Tiberius, worn out with age and the cares of empire, died suddenly on the selfsame Cape Misenum, whose peak we see from this very spot magnified in the mists of evening. I demanded justice of Caius, his successor, whose perception was naturally acute, and who was acquainted with Syrian affairs. But marvel with me, Lamia, at the maliciousness of fortune, resolved on my discomfiture. Caius then had in his suite at Rome the Jew Agrippa, his companion, the friend of his childhood, whom he cherished as his own eyes. Now Agrippa favoured Vitellius, inasmuch as Vitellius was the enemy of Antipas, whom

Agrippa pursued with his hatred. The Emperor adopted the prejudices of his beloved Asiatic, and refused even to listen to me. There was nothing for me to do but bow beneath the stroke of unmerited misfortune. With tears for my meat and gall for my portion, I withdrew to my estates in Sicily, where I should have died of grief if my sweet Pontia had not come to console her father. I have cultivated wheat, and succeeded in producing the fullest ears in the whole province. But now my life is ended; the future will judge between Vitellius and me."

"Pontius," replied Lamia, "I am persuaded that you acted towards the Samaritans according to the rectitude of your character, and solely in the interests of Rome. But were you not perchance on that occasion a trifle too much influenced by that impetuous courage which has always swayed you? You will remember that in Judæa it often happened that I who, younger than you, should naturally have been more impetuous than you, was obliged to urge you to clemency and suavity."

"Suavity towards the Jews!" cried Pontius Pilate. "Although you have lived amongst them, it seems clear that you ill understand those enemies of the human race. Haughty and at the same time base, combining an invincible obstinacy with a despicably mean spirit, they weary alike your love and your hatred. My character, Lamia,

was formed upon the maxims of the divine Augustus. When I was appointed Procurator of Judæa, the world was already penetrated with the majestic ideal of the *pax romana*. No longer, as in the days of our internecine strife, were we witnesses to the sack of a province for the aggrandizement of a proconsul. I knew where my duty lay. I was careful that my actions should be governed by prudence and moderation. The gods are my witnesses that I was resolved upon mildness, and upon mildness only. Yet what did my benevolent intentions avail me? You were at my side, Lamia, when, at the outset of my career as ruler, the first rebellion came to a head. Is there any need for me to recall the details to you? The garrison had been transferred from Cæsarea to take up its winter quarters at Jerusalem. Upon the ensigns of the legionaries appeared the presentment of Cæsar. The inhabitants of Jerusalem, who did not recognize the indwelling divinity of the Emperor, were scandalized at this, as though, when obedience is compulsory, it were not less abject to obey a god than a man. The priests of their nation appeared before my tribunal imploring me with supercilious humility to have the ensigns removed from within the holy city. Out of reverence for the divine nature of Cæsar and the majesty of the empire, I refused to comply. Then the rabble made common cause with the priests, and all

around the pretorium portentous cries of supplication arose. I ordered the soldiers to stack their spears in front of the tower of Antonia, and to proceed, armed only with sticks like lictors, to disperse the insolent crowd. But, heedless of blows, the Jews continued their entreaties, and the more obstinate amongst them threw themselves on the ground and, exposing their throats to the rods, deliberately courted death. You were a witness of my humiliation on that occasion, Lamia. By the order of Vitellius I was forced to send the insignia back to Cæsarea. That disgrace I had certainly not merited. Before the immortal gods I swear that never once during my term of office did I flout justice and the laws. But I am grown old. My enemies and detractors are dead. I shall die unavenged. Who will now retrieve my character?"

He moaned and lapsed into silence. Lamia replied—

"That man is prudent who neither hopes nor fears anything from the uncertain events of the future. Does it matter in the least what estimate men may form of us hereafter? We ourselves are after all our own witnesses, and our own judges. You must rely, Pontius Pilate, on the testimony you yourself bear to your own rectitude. Be content with your own personal respect and that of your friends. For the rest, we know that mildness by itself will not suffice for the work of

government. There is but little room in the actions of public men for that indulgence of human frailty which the philosophers recommend."

"We'll say no more at present," said Pontius. "The sulphureous fumes which rise from the Phlegræan plain are more powerful when the ground which exhales them is still warm beneath the sun's rays. I must hasten on. Adieu! But now that I have rediscovered a friend, I should wish to take advantage of my good fortune. Do me the favour, Ælius Lamia, to give me your company at supper at my house to-morrow. My house stands on the seashore, at the extreme end of the town in the direction of Misenum. You will easily recognize it by the porch which bears a painting representing Orpheus surrounded by tigers and lions, whom he is charming with the strains from his lyre.

"Till to-morrow, Lamia," he repeated, as he climbed once more into his litter. "To-morrow we will talk about Judæa."

The following day at the supper hour Lamia presented himself at the house of Pontius Pilate. Two couches only were in readiness for occupants. Creditably but simply equipped, the table held a silver service in which were set out beccaficos in honey, thrushes, oysters from the Lucrine lake, and lampreys from Sicily. As they proceeded with their repast, Pontius and Lamia

interchanged inquiries with one another about their ailments, the symptoms of which they described at considerable length, mutually emulous of communicating the various remedies which had been recommended to them. Then, congratulating themselves on being thrown together once more at Baiæ, they vied with one another in praise of the beauty of that enchanting coast and the mildness of the climate they enjoyed. Lamia was enthusiastic about the charms of the courtesans who frequented the seashore laden with golden ornaments and trailing draperies of barbaric broidery. But the aged Procurator deplored the ostentation with which by means of trumpery jewels and filmy garments foreigners and even enemies of the empire beguiled the Romans of their gold. After a time they turned to the subject of the great engineering feats that had been accomplished in the country; the prodigious bridge constructed by Caius between Puteoli and Baiæ, and the canals which Augustus excavated to convey the waters of the ocean to Lake Avernus and the Lucrine lake.

"I also," said Pontius, with a sigh, "I also wished to set afoot public works of great utility. When, for my sins, I was appointed Governor of Judæa, I conceived the idea of furnishing Jerusalem with an abundant supply of pure water by means of an aqueduct. The elevation of the levels, the proportionate capacity of the

various parts, the gradient for the brazen reservoirs to which the distribution pipes were to be fixed—I had gone into every detail, and decided everything for myself with the assistance of mechanical experts. I had drawn up regulations for the superintendents so as to prevent individuals from making unauthorized depredations. The architects and the workmen had their instructions. I gave orders for the commencement of operations. But far from viewing with satisfaction the construction of that conduit, which was intended to carry to their town upon its massive arches not only water but health, the inhabitants of Jerusalem gave vent to lamentable outcries. They gathered tumultuously together, exclaiming against the sacrilege and impiousness, and, hurling themselves upon the workmen, scattered the foundation stones. Can you picture to yourself, Lamia, a filthier set of barbarians? Nevertheless, Vitellius decided in their favour, and I received orders to put a stop to the work."

"It is a knotty point," said Lamia, "how far one is justified in devising things for the commonweal against the will of the populace."

Pontius Pilate continued as though he had not heard this interruption.

"Refuse an aqueduct! What madness! But whatever is of Roman origin is distasteful to the Jews. In their eyes we are an unclean race, and our very presence appears a profanation to

them. You will remember that they would never venture to enter the pretorium for fear of defiling themselves, and that I was consequently obliged to discharge my magisterial functions in an open-air tribunal on that marble pavement your feet so often trod.

"They fear us and they despise us. Yet is not Rome the mother and warden of all those peoples who nestle smiling upon her venerable bosom? With her eagles in the van, peace and liberty have been carried to the very confines of the universe. Those whom we have subdued we look on as our friends, and we leave those conquered races, nay, we secure to them the permanence of their customs and their laws. Did Syria, aforetime rent asunder by its rabble of petty kings, ever even begin to taste of peace and prosperity until it submitted to the armies of Pompey? And when Rome might have reaped a golden harvest as the price of her goodwill, did she lay hands on the hoards that swell the treasuries of barbaric temples? Did she despoil the shrine of Cybele at Pessinus, or the Morimene and Cilician sanctuaries of Jupiter, or the temple of the Jewish god at Jerusalem? Antioch, Palmyra, and Apamea, secure despite their wealth, and no longer in dread of the wandering Arab of the desert, have erected temples to the genius of Rome and the divine Cæsar. The Jews alone hate and withstand us. They with-

hold their tribute till it is wrested from them, and obstinately rebel against military service."

"The Jews," replied Lamia, "are profoundly attached to their ancient customs. They suspected you, unreasonably I admit, of a desire to abolish their laws and change their usages. Do not resent it, Pontius, if I say that you did not always act in such a way as to disperse their unfortunate illusion. It gratified you, despite your habitual self-restraint, to play upon their fears, and more than once have I seen you betray in their presence the contempt with which their beliefs and religious ceremonies inspired you. You irritated them particularly by giving instructions for the sacerdotal garments and ornaments of their high priest to be kept in ward by your legionaries in the Antonine tower. One must admit that though they have never risen like us to an appreciation of things divine, the Jews celebrate rites which their very antiquity renders venerable."

Pontius Pilate shrugged his shoulders.

"They have very little exact knowledge of the nature of the gods," he said. "They worship Jupiter, yet they abstain from naming him or erecting a statue of him. They do not even adore him under the semblance of a rude stone, as certain of the Asiatic peoples are wont to do. They know nothing of Apollo, of Neptune, of Mars, nor of Pluto, nor of any goddess. At

the same time, I am convinced that in days gone by they worshipped Venus. For even to this day their women bring doves to the altar as victims; and you know as well as I that the dealers who trade beneath the arcades of their temple supply those birds in couples for sacrifice. I have even been told that on one occasion some madman proceeded to overturn the stalls bearing these offerings, and their owners with them. The priests raised an outcry about it, and looked on it as a case of sacrilege. I am of opinion that their custom of sacrificing turtle-doves was instituted in honour of Venus. Why are you laughing, Lamia?"

"I was laughing," said Lamia, "at an amusing idea which, I hardly know how, just occurred to me. I was thinking that perchance some day the Jupiter of the Jews might come to Rome and vent his fury upon you. Why should he not? Asia and Africa have already enriched us with a considerable number of gods. We have seen temples in honour of Isis and the dog-faced Anubis erected in Rome. In the public squares, and even on the race-courses, you may run across the Bona Dea of the Syrians mounted on an ass. And did you never hear how, in the reign of Tiberius, a young patrician passed himself off as the horned Jupiter of the Egyptians, Jupiter Ammon, and in this disguise procured the favours of an illustrious lady who was too virtu-

ous to deny anything to a god? Beware, Pontius, lest the invisible Jupiter of the Jews disembark some day on the quay at Ostia!"

At the idea of a god coming out of Judæa, a fleeting smile played over the severe countenance of the Procurator. Then he replied gravely—

"How would the Jews manage to impose their sacred law on outside peoples when they are in a perpetual state of tumult amongst themselves as to the interpretation of that law? You have seen them yourselves, Lamia, in the public squares, split up into twenty rival parties, with staves in their hands, abusing each other and clutching one another by the beard. You have seen them on the steps of the temple, tearing their filthy garments as a symbol of lamentation, with some wretched creature in a frenzy of prophetic exaltation in their midst. They have never realized that it is possible to discuss peacefully and with an even mind those matters concerning the divine which yet are hidden from the profane and wrapped in uncertainty. For the nature of the immortal gods remains hidden from us, and we cannot arrive at a knowledge of it. Though I am of opinion, none the less, that it is a prudent thing to believe in the providence of the gods. But the Jews are devoid of philosophy, and cannot tolerate any diversity of opinions. On the contrary, they judge worthy of the extreme penalty all those who on divine

subjects profess opinions opposed to their law. And as, since the genius of Rome has towered over them, capital sentences pronounced by their own tribunals can only be carried out with the sanction of the proconsul or the procurator, they harry the Roman magistrate at any hour to procure his signature to their baleful decrees, they besiege the pretorium with their cries of 'Death!' A hundred times, at least, have I known them, mustered, rich and poor together, all united under their priests, make a furious onslaught on my ivory chair, seizing me by the skirts of my robe, by the thongs of my sandals, and all to demand of me—nay, to exact from me—the death sentence on some unfortunate whose guilt I failed to perceive, and as to whom I could only pronounce that he was as mad as his accusers. A hundred times, do I say! Not a hundred, but every day and all day. Yet it was my duty to execute their law as if it were ours, since I was appointed by Rome not for the destruction, but for the upholding of their customs, and over them I had the power of the rod and the ax. At the outset of my term of office I endeavoured to persuade them to hear reason; I attempted to snatch their miserable victims from death. But this show of mildness only irritated them the more; they demanded their prey, fighting around me like a horde of vultures with wing and beak. Their priests re-

ported to Cæsar that I was violating their law, and their appeals, supported by Vitellius, drew down upon me a severe reprimand. How many times did I long, as the Greeks used to say, to dispatch accusers and accused in one convoy to the crows!

"Do not imagine, Lamia, that I nourish the rancour of the discomfited, the wrath of the super-annuated, against a people which in my person has prevailed against both Rome and tranquillity. But I foresee the extremity to which sooner or later they will reduce us. Since we cannot govern them, we shall be driven to destroy them. Never doubt it. Always in a state of insubordination, brewing rebellion in their inflammatory minds, they will one day burst forth upon us with a fury beside which the wrath of the Numidians and the mutterings of the Parthians are mere child's play. They are secretly nourishing preposterous hopes, and madly premeditating our ruin. How can it be otherwise, when, on the strength of an oracle, they are living in expectation of the coming of a prince of their own blood whose kingdom shall extend over the whole earth? There are no half measures with such a people. They must be exterminated. Jerusalem must be laid waste to the very foundation. Perchance, old as I am, it may be granted me to behold the day when her walls shall fall and the flames shall envelop

her houses, when her inhabitants shall pass under the edge of the sword, when salt shall be strown on the place where once the temple stood. And in that day I shall at length be justified."

Lamia exerted himself to lead the conversation back to a less acrimonious note.

"Pontius," he said, "it is not difficult for me to understand both your long-standing resentment and your sinister forebodings. Truly, what you have experienced of the character of the Jews is nothing to their advantage. But I lived in Jerusalem as an interested onlooker, and mingled freely with the people, and I succeeded in detecting certain obscure virtues in these rude folk which were altogether hidden from you. I have met Jews who were all mildness, whose simple manners and faithfulness of heart recalled to me what our poets have related concerning the Spartan lawgiver. And you yourself, Pontius, have seen perish beneath the cudgels of your legionaries simple-minded men who have died for a cause they believed to be just without revealing their names. Such men do not deserve our contempt. I am saying this because it is desirable in all things to preserve moderation and an even mind. But I own that I never experienced any lively sympathy for the Jews. The Jewesses, on the contrary, I found extremely pleasing. I was young then, and the Syrian women stirred all my senses to response. Their

ruddy lips, their liquid eyes that shone in the shade, their sleepy gaze pierced me to the very marrow. Painted and stained, smelling of nard and myrrh, steeped in odours, their physical attractions are both rare and delightful."

Pontius listened impatiently to these praises.

"I was not the kind of man to fall into the snares of the Jewish women," he said; "and since you have opened the subject yourself, Lamia, I was never able to approve of your laxity. If I did not express with sufficient emphasis formerly how culpable I held you for having intrigued at Rome with the wife of a man of consular rank, it was because you were then enduring heavy penance for your misdoings. Marriage from the patrician point of view is a sacred tie; it is one of the institutions which are the support of Rome. As to foreign women and slaves, such relations as one may enter into with them would be of little account were it not that they habituate the body to a humiliating effeminacy. Let me tell you that you have been too liberal in your offerings to the Venus of the Market-place; and what, above all, I blame in you is that you have not married in compliance with the law and given children to the Republic, as every good citizen is bound to do."

But the man who had suffered exile under Tiberius was no longer listening to the venerable magistrate. Having tossed off his cup of Faler-

nian, he was smiling at some image visible to his eye alone.

After a moment's silence he resumed in a very deep voice, which rose in pitch by little and little—

"With what languorous grace they dance, those Syrian women! I knew a Jewess at Jerusalem who used to dance in a poky little room on a thread-bare carpet, by the light of one smoky little lamp, waving her arms as she clanged her cymbals. Her loins arched, her head thrown back, and, as it were, dragged down by the weight of her heavy red hair, her eyes swimming with voluptuousness, eager, languishing, compliant, she would have made Cleopatra herself grow pale with envy. I was in love with her barbaric dances, her voice—a little raucous and yet so sweet—her atmosphere of incense, the semi-somnolescent state in which she seemed to live. I followed her everywhere. I mixed with the vile rabble of soldiers, conjurers, and extortioners with which she was surrounded. One day, however, she disappeared, and I saw her no more. Long did I seek her in disreputable alleys and taverns. It was more difficult to learn to do without her than to lose the taste for Greek wine. Some months after I lost sight of her, I learned by chance that she had attached herself to a small company of men and women who were followers of a young Galilean thaumatur-

gist. His name was Jesus; he came from Nazareth, and he was crucified for some crime, I don't quite know what. Pontius, do you remember anything about the man?"

Pontius Pilate contracted his brows, and his hand rose to his forehead in the attitude of one who probes the deeps of memory. Then after a silence of some seconds—

"Jesus?" he murmured, "Jesus—of Nazareth? I cannot call him to mind."

ANATOLE FRANCE.

THE FISHERMAN'S RING*

DURING the reign of the Doge Gradenigos there lived in Venice an old fisherman, Cecco by name. He had been an unusually strong man, and was still very strong for his age, but lately he had given up work and left it to his two sons to provide for him. He was very proud of his sons, and he loved them—ah, signor, how he loved them!

Fate had so ordered it that their bringing up had been almost entirely left to him. Their mother had died early, and so Cecco had to take care of them. He had looked after their clothes and cooked their food; he had sat in the boat with needle and cotton and mended and darned. He had not cared in the least that people had laughed at him on that account. He had also, quite alone, taught them all it was necessary for them to know. He had make a couple of able fishermen of them, and taught them to honour God and San Marco.

"Always remember," he said to them, "that Venice will never be able to stand in her own strength. Look at her! Has she not been built

*From "A Swedish Homestead," by permission.

on the waves? Look at the low islands close to land, where the sea plays amongst the seaweed. You would not venture to tread upon them, and yet it is upon such foundation that the whole city rests. And do you not know that the north wind has strength enough to throw both churches and palaces into the sea? Do you not know that we have such powerful enemies, that all the princes in Christendom cannot vanquish them? Therefore you must always pray to San Marco, for in his strong hands rests the chains which hold Venice suspended over the depths of the sea."

And in the evening, when the moon shed its light over Venice, greenish-blue from the sea-mist; when they quietly glided up the Canale Grande and the gondolas they met were full of singers; when the palaces shone in their white splendour, and thousands of lights mirrored themselves in the dark waters—then he always reminded them that they must thank San Marco for life and happiness.

But oh, signor! he did not forget him in the daytime either. When they returned from fishing and glided over the water of the lagoons, light-blue and golden; when the city lay before them, swimming on the waves; when the great ships passed in and out of the harbour, and the palace of the Doges shone like a huge jewel-casket, holding all the world's treasure—then he

never forgot to tell them that all these things were the gift of San Marco, and that they would all vanish if a single Venetian were ungrateful enough to give up believing in and adoring him.

Then, one day, the sons went out fishing on the open sea, outside Lido. They were in company with several others, had a splendid vessel, and intended being away several days. The weather was fine, and they hoped for a goodly haul.

They left the Rialto, the large island where the city proper lies, one early morning, and as they passed through the lagoons they saw all the islands which, like fortifications, protect Venice against the sea, appear through the mist of the morning. There were La Gindecca and San Giorgio on the right, and San Michele, Muracco and San Lazzaro on the left. Then island followed upon island in a large circle, right on to the long Lido lying straight before them, and forming, as it were, the clasp of this string of pearls. And beyond Lido was the wide, infinite sea.

When they were well at sea, some of them got into a small boat and rowed out to set their nets. It was still fine weather, although the waves were higher here than inside the islands. None of them, however, dreamt of any danger. They had a good boat and were experienced men.

But soon those left on the vessel saw that the sea and the sky suddenly grew darker in the north. They understood that a storm was coming on, and they at once shouted to their comrades, but they were already too far away to hear them.

The wind first reached the small boat. When the fishermen suddenly saw the waves rise around them, as herds of cattle on a large plain arise in the morning, one of the men in the boat stood up and beckoned to his comrades, but the same moment he fell backwards into the sea. Immediately afterwards a wave came which raised the boat on her bows, and one could see how the men, as it were, were shaken from off their seats and flung into the sea. It only lasted a moment, and everything had disappeared. Then the boat again appeared, keel upwards. The men in the vessel tried to reach the spot, but could not tack against the wind.

It was a terrific storm which came rushing over the sea, and soon the fishermen in the vessel had their work set to save themselves. They succeeded in getting home safely, however, and brought with them the news of the disaster. It was Cecco's two sons and three others who had perished.

Ah me! how strangely things come about! The same morning Cecco had gone down to the Rialto to the fish-market. He went about amongst the stands and strutted about like a fine

gentleman because he had no need to work. He even invited a couple of old Lido fishermen to an asteri and stood them a beaker of wine. He grew very important as he sat there and bragged and boasted about his sons. His spirits rose high, and he took out the zecchine—the one the Doge had given him when he had saved a child from drowning in Canale Grande. He was very proud of this large gold coin, carried it always about him, and showed it to people whenever there was an opportunity.

Suddenly a man entered the asteri and began to tell about the disaster, without noticing that Cecco was sitting there. But he had not been speaking long before Cecco threw himself over him and seized him by the throat.

"You do not dare to tell me that they are dead!" he shrieked—"not my sons!"

The man succeeded in getting away from him, but Cecco for a long time went on as if he were out of his mind. People heard him shout and groan; they crowded into the asteri—as many as it could hold—and stood round him in a circle as if he were a juggler.

Cecco sat on the floor and moaned. He hit the hard stone floor with his fist, and said over and over again:

"It is San Marco, San Marco, San Marco!"

"Cecco, you have taken leave of your senses from grief," they said to him.

"I knew it would happen on the open sea," Cecco said; "outside Lido and Malamocco, there, I knew it would happen. There San Marco would take them. He bore them a grudge. I have feared it, boy. Yes," he said, without hearing what they said to quiet him, "they once laughed at him, once when we were lying outside Lido. He has not forgotten it; he will not stand being laughed at."

He looked with confused glances at the bystanders, as if to seek help.

"Look here, Beppo from Malamocca," he said, stretching out his hand towards a big fisherman, "don't you believe it was San Marco?"

"Don't imagine any such thing, Cecco."

"Now you shall hear, Beppo, how it happened. You see, we were lying out at sea, and to while away the time I told them how San Marco had come to Venice. The evangelist San Marco was first buried in a beautiful cathedral at Alexandria in Egypt. But the town got into the possession of unbelievers, and one day the Khalifa ordered that they should build him a magnificent palace at Alexandria, and take some columns from the Christian churches for its decoration. But just at that time there were two Venetian merchants at Alexandria who had ten heavily-laden vessels lying in the harbour. When these men entered the church where San Marco was buried and heard the command of the Khal-

ifa, they said to the sorrowful priests: 'The precious body which you have in your church may be desecrated by the Saracens. Give it to us; we will honour it, for San Marco was the first to preach on the Lagoon, and the Doge will reward you.' And the priests gave their consent, and in order that the Christians of Alexandria should not object, the body of another holy man was placed in the Evangelist's coffin. But to prevent the Saracens from getting any news of the removal of the body, it was placed at the bottom of a large chest, and above it were packed hams and smoked bacon, which the Saracens could not endure. So when the Custom-house officers opened the lid of the chest, they at once hurried away. The two merchants, however, brought San Marco safely to Venice; you know, Beppo, that this is what they say."

"I do, Cecco."

"Yes; but just listen now," and Cecco half arose, and in his fear spoke in a low voice. "Something terrible now happened. When I told the boys that the holy man had been hidden underneath the bacon, they burst out laughing. I tried to hush them, but they only laughed the louder. Giacomo was lying on his stomach in the bows, and Pietro sat with his legs dangling outside the boat, and they both laughed so that it could be heard far out over the sea."

"But, Cecco, surely two children may be allowed to laugh."

"But don't you understand that is where they have perished to-day—on the very spot? Or can you understand why they should have lost their lives on that spot?"

Now they all began to talk to him and comfort him. It was his grief which made him lose his senses. This was not like San Marco. He would not revenge himself upon two children. Was it not natural that when a boat was caught in a storm this would happen on the open sea and not in the harbour?

Surely his sons had not lived in enmity with San Marco. They had heard them shout, "*Eviva San Marco!*" as eagerly as all the others, and had he not protected them to this very day. He had never, during the years that had passed, shown any sign of being angry with them.

"But, Cecco," they said, "you will bring misfortune upon us with your talk about San Marco. You, who are an old man and a wise man, should know better than to raise his anger against the Venetians. What are we without him?"

Cecco sat and looked at them bewildered.

"Then you don't believe it?"

"No one in his senses would believe such a thing."

It looked as if they had succeeded in quieting him.

"I will also try not to believe it," he said. He rose and walked towards the door. "It would be too cruel, would it not?" he said. "They were too handsome and too brave for anyone to hate them; I will not believe it."

He went home, and in the narrow street outside his door he met an old woman, one of his neighbours.

"They are reading a Mass in the cathedral for the souls of the dead," she said to Cecco, and hurried away. She was afraid of him; he looked so strange.

Cecco took his boat and made his way through the small canals down to Riva degli Schiavoni. There was a wide view from there; he looked towards Lido and the sea. Yes, it was a hard wind, but not a storm by any means; there were hardly any waves. And his sons had perished in weather like this! It was inconceivable.

He fastened his boat, and went across the Piazetta and the Market Place into San Marco. There were many people in the church, and they were all kneeling and praying in great fear; for it is much more terrible for the Venetians, you know, than any other people when there is a disaster at sea. They do not get their living from vineyards or fields, but they are all, every one of them, dependent on the sea. Whenever the sea

rose against any one of them they were all afraid, and hurried to San Marco to pray to him for protection.

As soon as Cecco entered the cathedral he stopped. He thought of how he had brought his little sons there, and taught them to pray to San Marco. "It is he who carries us over the sea, who opens the gates of Byzance for us and gives us the supremacy over the islands of the East." he said to them. Out of gratitude for all this the Venetians had built San Marco the most beautiful temple in the world, and no vessel ever returned from a foreign port without bringing a gift for San Marco.

Then they had admired the red marble walls of the cathedral and the golden mosaic ceiling. It was as if no misfortune could befall a city that had such a sanctuary for her patron Saint.

Cecco quickly knelt down and began to pray, the one *Paternoster* after the other. It came back, he felt. He would send it away by prayers. He would not believe anything bad about San Marco.

But it had been so storm at all. And so much was certain, that even if the Saint had not sent the storm, he had, in any case, not done anything to help Cecco's sons, but had allowed them to perish as if by accident. When this thought came upon him he began to pray; but the thought would not leave him.

And to think that San Marco had a treasury in this cathedral full of all the glories of fairy-land! To think that he had himself prayed to him all his life, and had never rowed past the Piazetta without going into the cathedral to invoke him!

Surely it was not by a mere accident that his sons had to-day perished on the sea! Oh, it was miserable for the Venetians to have no one better to depend upon! Just fancy a Saint who revenged himself upon two children—a patron Saint who could not protect against a gust of wind!

He stood up, and he shrugged his shoulders, and disparagingly waved his hand when he looked towards the tomb of the Saint in the chancel.

A verger was going about with a large chased silver-gilt dish, collecting gifts for San Marco. He went from the one person to the other, and also came to Cecco.

Cecco drew back as if it were the Evil One himself who handed him the plate. Did San Marco ask for gifts from him? Did he think he deserved gifts from him?

All at once he seized the large golden zecchine he had in his belt, and flung it into the plate with such violence that the ring of it could be heard all over the church. It disturbed those who were praying, and made them turn round. And all

who saw Cecco's face were terrified; he looked as if he were possessed of evil spirits.

Cecco immediately left the church, and at first felt it as a great relief that he had been revenged upon the Saint. He had treated him as one treats a usurer who demands more than he is entitled to. "Take this too," one says, and throws his last gold piece in the fellow's face so that the blood runs down over his eyes. But the usurer does not strike again—simply stoops and picks up the zecchine. So, too, had San Marco done. He had accepted Cecco's zecchine, having first robbed him of his sons. Cecco had made him accept a gift which had been tendered with such bitter hatred. Would an honourable man have put up with such treatment? But San Marco was a coward—both cowardly and revengeful. But he was not likely to revenge himself upon Cecco. He was, no doubt, pleased and thankful he had got the zecchine. He simply accepted it and pretended that it had been given as piously as could be.

When Cecco stood at the entrance, two vergers quickly passed him.

"It rises—it rises terribly!" the one said.

"What rises?" asked Cecco.

"The water in the crypt. It has risen a foot in the last two or three minutes."

When Cecco went down the steps, he saw a small pool of water on the Market Place close to

the bottom step. It was sea-water, which had splashed up from the Piazetta. He was surprised that the sea had risen so high, and he hurried down to the Riva, where his boat lay. Everything was as he had left it, only the water had risen considerably. It came rolling in broad waves through the five sea-gates; but the wind was not very strong. At the Riva there were already pools of sea-water, and the canals rose so that the doors in the houses facing the water had to be closed. The sky was all grey like the sea.

It never struck Cecco that it might grow into a serious storm. He would not believe any such thing. San Marco had allowed his sons to perish without cause. He felt sure this was no real storm. He would just like to see if it would be a storm, and he sat down beside his boat and waited.

Then suddenly rifts appeared in the dull-grey clouds which covered the sky. The clouds were torn asunder and flung aside, and large storm-clouds came rushing, black like warships, and from them scourging rain and hail fell upon the city. And something like quite a new sea came surging in from Lido. Ah, signor! they were not the swan-necked waves you have seen out there, the waves that bend their transparent necks and hasten towards the shore, and which, when they are pitilessly repulsed, float away again with their white foam-hair dispersed over the surface

of the sea. These were dark waves, chasing each other in furious rage, and over their tops the bitter froth of the sea was whipped into mist.

The wind was now so strong that the seagulls could no longer continue their quiet flight, but, shrieking, were thrust from their course. Cecco soon saw them with much trouble making their way towards the sea, so as not to be caught by the storm and flung against the walls. Hundreds of pigeons on San Marco's square flew up, beating their wings, so that it sounded like a new storm, and hid themselves away in all the nooks and corners of the church roof.

But it was not the birds alone that were frightened by the storm. A couple of gondolas had already got loose, and were thrown against the shore, and were nearly shattered. And now all the gondoliers came rushing to pull their boats into the boathouses, or place them in shelter in the small canals.

The sailors on the ships lying in the harbour worked with the anchor-chains to make the vessels fast, in order to prevent them drifting on to the shore. They took down the clothes hanging up to dry, pulled their long caps well over their foreheads, and began to collect all the loose articles lying about in order to bring them below deck. Outside Canale Grande a whole fishing-fleet came hurrying home. All the people from Lido and Malamocco who had sold their goods

at the Rialto were rushing homewards, before the storm grew too violent.

Cecco laughed when he saw the fishermen bending over their oars and straining themselves as if they were fleeing from death itself. Could they not see that it was only a gust of wind? They could very well have remained and given the Venetian women time to buy all their cattle, fish, and crabs.

He was certainly not going to pull his boat into shelter, although the storm was now violent enough for any ordinary man to have taken notice of it. The floating bridges were lifted up high and cast on to the shore, whilst the washerwomen hurried home shrieking. The broad-brimmed hats of the signors were blown off into the canals, from whence the street-boys fished them out with great glee. Sails were torn from the masts, and fluttered in the air with a crackling sound; children were knocked down by the strong wind; and the clothes hanging on the lines in the narrow streets were torn to rags and carried far away.

Cecco laughed at the storm—a storm which drove the birds away, and played all sorts of pranks in the street, like a boy. But, all the same, he pulled his boat under one of the arches of the bridge. One could really not allow what that wind might take it into its head to do.

In the evening Cecco thought that it would have been fun to have been out at sea. It would

have been splendid sailing with such a fresh wind. But on shore it was unpleasant. Chimneys were lifted right off; it rained tiles from the houses into the canals; the wind shook the doors and the window-shutters, rushed in under the open loggias of the palaces and tore off the decorations.

Cecco held out bravely, but he did not go home to bed. He could not take the boat home with him, so it was better to remain and look after it. But when anyone went by and said that it was terrible weather he would not admit it. He had experienced very different weather in his young days.

"Storm!" he said to himself—"call this a storm? And they think, perhaps, that it began the same moment I threw the zecchine to San Marco. As if he can command a real storm!"

When night came the wind and the sea grew still more violent, so that Venice trembled in her foundations. Doge Gradenigo and the Gentlemen of the High Council went in the darkness of the night to San Marco to pray for the city. Torch-bearers went before them, and the flames were spread out by the wind, so that they lay flat, like pennants. The wind tore the Doge's heavy brocade gown, so that two men were obliged to hold it.

Cecco thought this was the most remarkable thing he had ever seen—Doge Gradenigo going

himself to the cathedral on account of this bit of a wind! What would those people have done if there had been a real storm?

The waves beat incessantly against the bulwarks. In the darkness of the night it was as if white-headed wresters sprang up from the deep, and with teeth and claws clung fast to the piles to tear them loose from the shore. Cecco fancied he could hear their angry snorts when they were hurled back again. But he shuddered when he heard them come again and again, and tear in the bulwarks.

It seemed to him that the storm was far more terrible in the night. He heard shouts in the air, and that was not the wind. Sometimes black clouds came drifting like a whole row of heavy galleys, and it seemed as if they advanced to make an assault on the city. Then he heard distinctly someone speaking in one of the riven clouds over his head.

"Things look bad for Venice now," it said from the one cloud. "Soon our brothers the evil spirits will come and overthrow the city."

"I am afraid San Marco will not allow it to happen," came as a response from the other cloud.

"San Marco has been knocked down by a Venetian, so he lies powerless, and cannot help anyone," said the first.

The storm carried the words down to old Cecco, and from that moment he was on his

knees, praying San Marco for grace and forgiveness. For the evil spirits had spoken the truth. It did indeed look bad for Venice. The fair Queen of the Isles was near destruction. A Venetian had mocked San Marco, and therefore Venice was in danger of being carried away by the sea. There would be no more moonlight sails on her sea and in her canals, and no more barcaroles would be heard from her black gondolas. The sea would wash over the golden-haired signoras, over the proud palaces, over San Marco, resplendent with gold.

If there was no one to protect these islands, they were doomed to destruction. Before San Marco came to Venice it had often happened that large portions of them had been washed away by the waves.

At early dawn San Marco's Church bells began to ring. People crept to the church, their clothes being nearly torn off them.

The storm went on increasing. The priests had resolved to go out and adjure the storm and the sea. The main doors of the cathedral were opened, and the long procession streamed out of the church. Foremost the cross was carried, then came the choir-boys with wax candles, and last in the procession were carried the banner of San Marco and the Sacred Host.

But the storm did not allow itself to be cowed; on the contrary, it was as if it wished for nothing

better to play with. It upset the choir-boys, blew out the wax candles, and flung the baldachin, which was carried over the Host, on to the top of the Doge's palace. It was with the utmost trouble that they saved San Marco's banner, with the winged lion, from being carried away.

Cecco saw all this, and stole down to his boat moaning loudly. The whole day he lay near the shore, often wet by the waves and in danger of being washed into the sea. The whole day he was praying incessantly to God and San Marco. He felt that the fate of the whole city depended upon his prayers.

There were not many people about that day, but some few went moaning along the Riva. All spoke about the immeasurable damage the storm had wrought. One could see the houses tumbling down on the Murano. It was as if the whole island were under water. And also on the Rialto one or two houses had fallen.

The storm continued the whole day with unabated violence. In the evening a large multitude of people assembled at the Market Place and the Piazetta, although these were nearly covered with water. People dared not remain in their houses, which shook in their very foundations. And the cries of those who feared disaster mingled with the lamentations of those whom it had already overtaken. Whole dwellings were under water; children were drowned in their cradles.

The old and the sick had been swept with the overturned houses into the waves.

Cecco was still lying and praying to San Marco. Oh, how could the crime of a poor fisherman be taken in such earnest? Surely it was not his fault that the saint was so powerless! He would let the demons take him and his boat; he deserved no better fate. But not the whole city!—oh, God in heaven, not the whole city!

"My sons!" Cecco said to San Marco. "What do I care about my sons when Venice is at stake! I would willingly give a son for each tile in danger of being blown into the canal if I could keep them in their place at that price. Oh, San Marco, each little stone of Venice is worth as much as a promising son."

At times he saw terrible things. There was a large galley which had torn itself from its moorings and now came drifting towards the shore. It went straight against the bulwark, and struck it with the ram's head in her bows, just as if it had been an enemy's ship. It gave blow after blow, and the attack was so violent that the vessel immediately sprang a leak. The water rushed in, the leak grew larger, and the proud ship went to pieces. But the whole time one could see the captain and two or three of the crew, who would not leave the vessel, cling to the deck and meet death without attempting to escape it.

The second night came, and Cecco's prayers continued to knock at the gate of heaven.

"Let me alone suffer!" he cried. "San Marco, it is more than a man can bear, thus to drag others with him to destruction. Only send thy lion and kill me; I shall not attempt to escape. Everything that thou wilt have me give up for the city, that will I willingly sacrifice."

Just as he had uttered these words he looked towards the Piazetta, and he thought he could no longer see San Marco's lion on the granite pillar. Had San Marco permitted his lion to be overthrown? old Cecco cried. He was nearly giving up Venice.

Whilst he was lying there he saw visions and heard voices all the time. The demons talked and moved to and fro. He heard them wheeze like wild beasts every time they made their assaults on the bulwarks. He did not mind them much; it was worse about Venice.

Then he heard in the air above him the beating of strong wings; this was surely San Marco's lion flying overhead. It moved backwards and forwards in the air; he saw and yet he did not see it. Then it seemed to him as if it descended on Riva degli Schiavoni, where he was lying, and prowled about there. He was on the point of jumping into the sea from fear, but he remained sitting where he was. It was no doubt he whom the lion sought. If that could only save Venice,

then he was quite willing to let San Marco avenge himself upon him.

Then the lion came crawling along the ground like a cat. He saw it making ready to spring. He noticed that it beat its wings and screwed its large carbuncle eyes together till they were only small fiery slits.

Then old Cecco certainly did think of creeping down to his boat and hiding himself under the arch of the bridge, but he pulled himself together and remained where he was. The same moment a tall, imposing figure stood by his side.

"Good-evening, Cecco," said the man; "take your boat and row me across to San Giorgio Maggiore."

"Yes, signor," immediately replied the old fisherman.

It was as if he had awakened from a dream. The lion had disappeared, and the man must be somebody who knew him, although Cecco could not quite remember where he had seen him before. He was glad to have company. The terrible heaviness and anguish that had been over him since he had revolted against the Saint suddenly vanished. As to rowing across to San Giorgio, he did not for a moment think that it could be done.

"I don't believe we can even get the boat out," he said to himself.

But there was something about the man at his

side that made him feel he must do all he possibly could to serve him; and he did succeed in getting out the boat. He helped the stranger into the boat and took the oars.

Cecco could not help laughing to himself.

"What are you thinking about? Don't go out further in any case," he said. "Have you ever seen the like of these waves? Do tell him that it is not within the power of man."

But he felt as if he could not tell the stranger that it was impossible. He was sitting there as quietly as if he were sailing to the Lido on a summer's eve. And Cecco began to row to San Giorgio Maggiore.

It was a terrible row. Time after time the waves washed over them.

"Oh, stop him!" Cecco said under his breath; "do stop the man who goes to sea in such weather! Otherwise he is a sensible old fisherman. Do stop him!"

Now the boat was up a steep mountain, and then it went down into a valley. The foam splashed down on Cecco from the waves that rushed past him like runaway horses, but in spite of everything he approached San Giorgio.

"For whom are you doing all this, risking boat and life?" he said. "You don't even know whether he can pay you. He does not look like a fine gentleman. He is no better dressed than you are."

But he only said this to keep up his courage, and not to be ashamed of his tractability. He was simply compelled to do everything the man in the boat wanted.

"But in any case not right to San Giorgio, you foolhardy old man," he said. "The wind is even worse there than at the Rialto."

But he went there, nevertheless, and made the boat fast whilst the stranger went on shore. He thought the wisest thing he could do would be to slip away and leave his boat, but he did not do it. He would rather die than deceive the stranger. He saw the latter go into the Church of San Giorgio. Soon afterwards he returned, accompanied by a knight in full armour.

"Row us now to San Nicolo in Lido," said the stranger.

"Aye, aye," Cecco thought; "why not to Lido?" They had already, in constant anguish and death, rowed to San Giorgio; why should they not set out for Lido?

And Cecco was shocked at himself that he obeyed the stranger even unto death, for he now actually steered for the Lido.

Being now three in the boat, it was still heavier work. He had no idea how he should be able to do it. "You might have lived many years yet," he said sorrowfully to himself. But the strange thing was that he was not sorrowful, all the same. He was so glad that he could have

laughed aloud. And then he was proud that he could make headway. "He knows how to use his oars, does old Cecco," he said.

They laid-to at Lido, and the two strangers went on shore. They walked toward San Nicolo in Lido, and soon returned accompanied by an old Bishop, with robe and stole, crosier in hand, and mitre on head.

"Now row out to the open sea," said the first stranger.

Old Cecco shuddered. Should he row out to the sea, where his sons perished? Now he had not a single cheerful word to say to himself. He did not think so much of the storm, but of the terror it was to have to go out to the graves of his sons. If he rowed out there, he felt that he gave the stranger more than his life.

The three men sat silently in the boat as if they were on watch. Cecco saw them bend forward and gaze into the night. They had reached the gate of the sea at Lido, and the great storm-ridden sea lay before them.

Cecco sobbed within himself. He thought of two dead bodies rolling about in these waves. He gazed into the water for two familiar faces. But onward the boat went. Cecco did not give in.

Then suddenly the three men rose up in the boat; and Cecco fell upon his knees, although

he still went on holding the oars. A big ship steered straight against them.

Cecco could not quite tell whether it was a ship or only drifting mist. The sails were large, spread out, as it were, towards the four corners of heaven; and the hull was gigantic. but it looked as if it were built of the lightest sea-mist. He thought he saw men on board and heard shouting; but the crew were like deep darkness, and the shouting was like the roar of the storm.

However it was, it was far too terrible to see the ship steer straight upon them, and Cecco closed his eyes.

But the three men in the boat must have averted the collision, for the boat was not upset. When Cecco looked up the ship had fled out to sea, and loud wailings pierced the night.

He rose, trembling to row further. He felt so tired that he could hardly hold the oars. But now there was no longer any danger. The storm had gone down, and the waves speedily laid themselves to rest.

"Now row us back to Venice," said the stranger to the fisherman.

Cecco rowed the boat to Lido, where the Bishop went on shore, and to San Giorgio, where the knight left them. The first powerful stranger went with him all the way to the Rialto.

When they had landed at Riva degli Schiavoni he said to the fisherman:

"When it is daylight thou shalt go to the Doge and tell him what thou hast seen this night. Tell him that San Marco and San Giorgio and San Nicolo have to-night fought the evil spirits that would destroy Venice, and have put them to flight."

"Yes, signor," the fisherman answered, "I will tell everything. But how shall I speak so that the Doge will believe me?"

Then San Marco handed him a ring with a precious stone possessed of a wonderful lustre.

"Show this to the Doge," he said, "then he will understand that it brings a message from me. He knows my ring, which is kept in San Marco's treasury in the cathedral."

The fisherman took the ring, and kissed it reverently.

"Further, thou shalt tell the Doge," said the holy man, "that this is a sign that I shall never forsake Venice. Even when the last Doge has left Palazzo Ducali I will live and preserve Venice. Even if Venice lose her islands in the East and the supremacy of the sea, and no Doge ever again sets out on the Bucintoro, even then I will preserve the city beautiful and resplendent. It shall always be rich and beloved, always be lauded and its praises sung, always a place of joy

for men to live in. Say this, Cecco, and the Doge will not forsake thee in thine old age."

Then he disappeared; and soon the sun rose above the gate of the sea at Torcello. With its first beautiful rays it shed a rosy light over the white city and over the sea that shone in many colours. A red glow lay over San Giorgio and San Marco, and over the whole shore, studded with palaces. And in the lovely morning radiant Venetian ladies came out on to the loggias and greeted with smiles the rising day.

Venice was once again the beautiful goddess, rising from the sea in her shell of rose-coloured pearl. Beautiful as never before, she combed her golden hair, and threw the purple robe around her, to begin one of her happiest days. For a transport of bliss filled her when the old fisherman brought San Marco's ring to the Doge, and she heard how the Saint, now, and until the end of time, would hold his protecting hand over her

SELMA LAGERLÖF.

LA GRANDE BRETÈCHE*

"AH! Madame," replied Doctor Horace Bianchon to the lady at whose house he was supping, "it is true that I have many terrible histories in my repertory; but every tale has its due hour in a conversation, according to the clever saying reported by Chamfort and said to the Duc de Fronsac: 'There are ten bottles of champagne between your joke and the present moment.' "

"But it is past midnight; what better hour could you have?" said the mistress of the house.

"Yes, tell us, Monsieur Bianchon," urged the assembled company.

At a gesture from the complying doctor, silence reigned.

"About a hundred yards from Vendôme," he said, "on the banks of the Loire, is an old brown house, covered with very steep roofs, and so completely isolated that there is not so much as an evil-smelling tannery, nor a shabby inn such as you see at the entrance of all little towns, in its neighbourhood. In front of this dwelling is a gar-

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den overlooking the river, where the box edgings, once carefully clipped, which bordered the paths, now cross them and straggle as they fancy. A few willows with their roots in the Loire have made a rapid growth, like the enclosing hedge, and together they half hide the house. Plants which we call weeds drape the bank toward the river with their beautiful vegetation. Fruit-trees, neglected for half a score of years, no longer yield a product, and their shoots and suckers have formed an undergrowth. The espaliers are like a hornbeam hedge. The paths, formerly gravelled, are full of purslain; so that, strictly speaking, there are no paths at all.

"From the crest of the mountain, on which hang the ruins of the old castle of Vendôme (the only spot whence the eye can look down into this enclosure) we say to ourselves that at an earlier period, now difficult to determine, this corner of the earth was the delight of some gentleman devoted to roses and tulips, in a word, to horticulture, but above all possessing a keen taste for good fruits. An arbour is still standing, or rather the remains of one, and beneath it is a table which time has not yet completely demolished.

"From the aspect of this garden, now no more, the negative joys of the peaceful life of the provinces can be inferred, just as we infer the life of some worthy from the epitaph on his tomb. To complete the sad and tender ideas which take

possession of the soul, a sundial on the wall bears this inscription, Christian yet bourgeois, 'ULTIMAM COGITA.' The roofs are dilapidated, the blinds always closed, the balconies are filled with swallows' nests, and gates are locked. Tall herbs and grasses trace in green lines the chinks and crevices of the stone portico; the locks are rusty. Sun and moon, summer and winter and snow have rotted the wood, warped the planks, and worn away the paint. The gloomy silence is unbroken save by the birds, the cats, the martens, the rats, the mice, all free to scamper or fly, and to fight and to eat themselves up.

"An invisible hand has written the word 'MYSTERY' everywhere. If, impelled by curiosity, you wish to look at this house, on the side toward the road you will see a large gate with an arched top, in which the children of the neighbourhood have made large holes. This gate, as I heard later, had been disused for ten years. Through these irregular holes you can observe the perfect harmony which exists between the garden side and the courtyard side of the premises. The same neglect everywhere. Lines of grass surround the paving-stones. Enormous cracks furrow the walls, the blackened eaves of which are festooned with pellitori. The steps of the portico are disjointed, the rope of the bell is rotten, the gutters are dropping apart. What fire from heaven has fallen

here? What tribunal has ordained that salt be cast upon this dwelling? Has God been mocked here; or France betrayed? These are the questions we ask as we stand there; the reptiles crawl about but they give no answer.

"This empty and deserted house is a profound enigma, whose solution is known to none. It was formerly a small fief, and is called La Grande Bretèche. During my stay at Vendôme, where Desplein had sent me in charge of a rich patient, the sight of this strange dwelling was one of my keenest pleasures. It was better than a ruin. A ruin possesses memories of positive authenticity; but this habitation, still standing, though slowly demolished by an avenging hand, contained some secret, some mysterious thought—it betrayed at least a strange caprice.

"More than once of an evening I jumped the hedge, now a tangle, which guarded the enclosure. I braved the scratches; I walked that garden with out a master, that property which was neither public nor private; for hours I stayed there contemplating its decay. Not even to obtain the history which underlay (and to which no doubt was due) this strange spectacle would I have asked a single question of any gossiping countryman. Standing there I invented enchanting tales; I gave myself up to debauches of melancholy which fascinated me. Had I known the

reason, perhaps a common one, for this strange desertion, I should have lost the unwritten poems with which I intoxicated myself. To me this sanctuary evoked the most varied images of human life darkened by sorrows; sometimes it was a cloister without the nuns; sometimes a graveyard and its peace, without the dead who talk to you in epitaphs; to-day the house of the leper, to-morrow that of the Atrides; but above all was it the provinces with their composed ideas, their hour-glass life.

"Often I wept there, but I never smiled. More than once an involuntary terror seized me, as I heard above my head the muffled whirr of a ring-dove's wings hurrying past. The soil is damp; care must be taken against the lizards, the vipers, the frogs, which wander about with the wild liberty of nature; above all, it is well not to fear cold, for there are moments when you feel an icy mantle laid upon your shoulders like the hand of the Commander on the shoulder of Don Juan. One evening I shuddered; the wind had caught and turned a rusty vane. Its creak was like a moan issuing from the house; at a moment, too, when I was ending a gloomy drama in which I explained to myself the monumental dolor of that scene.

"That night I returned to my inn, a prey to gloomy thoughts. After I had supped the landlady entered my room with a mysterious air, and

said to me, 'Monsieur, Monsieur Regnault is here.'

"'Who is Monsieur Regnault?'

"'Is it possible that monsieur doesn't know Monsieur Regnault? Ah, how funny!' she said, leaving the room.

"Suddenly I beheld a long, slim man, clothed in black, holding his hat in his hand, who presented himself, much like a man about to leap on a rival, and showed me a retreating forehead, a small, pointed head and a livid face, in colour somewhat like a glass of dirty water. You would have taken him for the usher of a minister. This unknown personage wore an old coat much worn in the folds, but he had a diamond in the frill of his shirt, and gold earrings in his ears.

"'Monsieur, to whom have I the honor of speaking?' I said.

"He took a chair, sat down before my fire, laid his hat on my table and replied, rubbing his hands: 'Ah! it is very cold. Monsieur, I am Monsieur Regnault.'

"I bowed, saying to myself: *'Il bondo cani!* seek!'

"'I am,' he said, 'the notary of Vendôme.'

"'Delighted, monsieur,' I replied, 'but I am not in the way of making my will,—for reasons, alas, too well known to me.'

"'One moment!' he resumed, raising his hand as if to impose silence; 'Permit me, monsieur, per-

mit me! I have learned that you sometimes enter the garden of La Grande Bretèche and walk there?'

"'Yes, monsieur.'

"'One moment!' he said, repeating his gesture. 'That action constitutes a misdemeanour. Monsieur, I came in the name and as testamentary executor of the late Comtesse de Merret to beg you to discontinue your visits. One moment! I am not a Turk; I do not wish to impute a crime to you. Besides, it is quite excusable that you, a stranger, should be ignorant of the circumstances which compel me to let the handsomest house in Vendôme go to ruin. Nevertheless, monsieur, as you seem to be a person of education, you no doubt know that the law forbids trespassers on enclosed property. A hedge is the same as a wall. But the state in which that house is left may well excuse your curiosity. I should be only too glad to leave you free to go and come as you liked there, but charged as I am to execute the wishes of the testatrix, I have the honour, monsieur, to request that you do not again enter that garden. I myself, monsieur, have not, since the reading of the will, set foot in that house, which, as I have already had the honour to tell you, I hold under the will of Madame de Merret. We have only taken account of the number of the doors and windows so as to assess the taxes which I pay annually from the funds left by the late

countess for that purpose. Ah, monsieur, that will made a great deal of noise in Vendôme!'

"There the worthy man paused to blow his nose. I respected his loquacity, understanding perfectly that the testamentary bequest of Madame de Merret had been the most important event of his life, the head and front of his reputation, his glory, his Restoration. So then, I must bid adieu to my beautiful reveries, my romances! I was not so rebellious as to deprive myself of getting the truth, as it were officially, out of the man of law, so I said,—

" 'Monsieur, if it is not indiscreet, may I ask the reason of this singularity?'

"At these words a look which expressed the pleasure of a man who rides a hobby passed over Monsieur Regnault's face. He pulled up his shirt-collar with a certain conceit, took out his snuff-box, opened it, offered it to me, and on my refusal, took a strong pinch himself. He was happy. A man who hasn't a hobby doesn't know how much can be got out of life. A hobby is the exact medium between a passion and a monomania. At that moment I understood Sterne's fine expression to its fullest extent, and I formed a complete idea of the joy with which my Uncle Toby—Trim assisting—bestrode his war-horse.

" 'Monsieur,' said Monsieur Regnault, 'I was formerly head clerk to Maître Roguin in Paris. An excellent lawyer's office of which you have

doubtless heard? No! And yet a most unfortunate failure made it, I may say, celebrated. Not having the means to buy a practice in Paris at the price to which they rose in 1816, I came here to Vendôme, where I have relations,—among them a rich aunt, who gave me her daughter in marriage.'

"Here he made a slight pause, and then resumed:

" 'Three months after my appointment was ratified by Monseigneur the Keeper of the Seals, I was sent for one evening just as I was going to bed (I was not then married) by Madame la Comtesse de Merret, then living in her château at Merret. Her lady's-maid, an excellent girl who is now serving in this inn, was at the door with the countess's carriage. Ah! one moment! I ought to tell you, monsieur, that Monsieur le Comte de Merret had gone to die in Paris about two months before I came here. He died a miserable death from excesses of all kinds, to which he gave himself up. You understand? Well, the day of his departure Madame la Comtesse left la Grand Bretèche, and dismantled it. They do say that she even burned the furniture, and the carpets, and all appurtenances whatsoever and wheresoever contained on the premises leased to the said— Ah! beg pardon; what am I saying? I thought I was dictating a lease. Well, monsieur, she burned everything, they say, in the meadow

at Merret. Were you ever at Merret, monsieur?'

"Not waiting for me to speak, he answered for me: 'No. Ah! it is a fine spot. For three months, or thereabouts,' he continued, nodding his head, 'Monsieur le Comte and Madame la Comtesse had been living at La Grande Bretèche in a very singular way. They admitted no one to the house; madame lived on the ground-floor, and monsieur on the first floor. After Madame la Comtesse was left alone she never went to church. Later, in her own château she refused to see the friends who came to visit her. She changed greatly after she left La Grande Bretèche and came to Merret. That dear woman (I say dear, though I never saw her but once, because she gave me this diamond),—that good lady was very ill; no doubt she had given up all hope of recovery, for she died without calling in a doctor; in fact, some of our ladies thought she was not quite right in her mind. Consequently, monsieur, my curiosity was greatly excited when I learned that Madame de Merret needed my services; and I was not the only one deeply interested; that very night, though it was late, the whole town knew I had gone to Merret.'

"The good man paused a moment to arrange his facts, and then continued: 'The lady's maid answered rather vaguely the questions which I put to her as we drove along; she did, however, tell me that her mistress had received the last sacra-

ments that day from the curate of Merret, and that she was not likely to live through the night. I reached the château about eleven o'clock. I went up the grand staircase. After passing through a number of dark and lofty rooms, horribly cold and damp, I entered the state bedroom where Madame la Comtesse was lying. In consequence of the many stories that were told about this lady (really, monsieur, I should never end if I related all of them) I expected to find her a fascinating coquette. Would you believe it, I could scarcely see her at all in the huge bed in which she lay. It is true that the only light in that vast room, with friezes of the old style powdered with dust enough to make you sneeze on merely looking at them, was one Argand lamp. Ah! but you say you have never been at Merret. Well, monsieur, the bed was one of those old-time beds with a high tester covered with flowered chintz. A little night-table stood by the bed, and on it I noticed a copy of the "Imitation of Christ."

"'Allow me a parenthesis,' he said, interrupting himself. 'I bought that book subsequently, also the lamp, and presented them to my wife. In the room was a large sofa for the woman who was taking care of Madame de Merret, and two chairs. That was all. No fire. The whole would not have made ten lines of an inventory. Ah! my dear monsieur, could you have seen her as I saw her then, in that vast room hung with

brown tapestry, you would have imagined you were in the pages of a novel. It was glacial,—better than that, funereal,' added the worthy man, raising his arm theatrically and making a pause. Presently he resumed:

"'By dint of peering round and coming close to the bed I at length saw Madame de Merret, thanks to the lamp which happened to shine on the pillows. Her face was as yellow as wax, and looked like two hands joined together. Madame la Comtesse wore a lace cap, which, however, allowed me to see her fine hair, white as snow. She was sitting up in the bed, but apparently did so with difficulty. Her large black eyes, sunken no doubt with fever, and almost lifeless, hardly moved beneath the bones where the eyebrows usually grow. Her forehead was damp. Her fleshless hands were like bones covered with thin skin; the veins and muscles could all be seen. She must once have been very handsome, but now I was seized with—I couldn't tell you what feeling, as I looked at her. Those who buried her said afterward that no living creature had ever been as wasted as she without dying. Well, it was awful to see. Some mortal disease had eaten up that woman till there was nothing left of her but a phantom. Her lips, of a pale violet, seemed not to move when she spoke. Though my profession had familiarized me with such scenes, in bringing me often to the bedside of the dying, to

receive their last wishes, I must say that the tears and the anguish of families and friends which I have witnessed were as nothing compared to this solitary woman in that vast building. I did not hear the slightest noise, I did not see the movement which the breathing of the dying woman would naturally give to the sheet that covered her; I myself remained motionless, looking at her in a sort of stupour. Indeed, I fancy I am there still. At last her large eyes moved; she tried to lift her right hand, which fell back upon the bed; then these words issued from her lips like a breath, for her voice was no longer a voice,—

" ' "I have awaited you with impatience."

" 'Her cheeks coloured. The effort to speak was great. The old woman who was watching her here rose and whispered in my ear: "Don't speak; Madame la Comtesse is past hearing the slightest sound; you would only agitate her." I sat down. A few moments later Madame de Merret collected all her remaining strength to move her right arm and put it, not without great difficulty, under her bolster. She paused an instant; then she made a last effort and withdrew her hand which now held a sealed paper. Great drops of sweat rolled from her forehead.

" ' "I give you my will," she said. "Oh, my God! Oh!"

" 'That was all. She seized a crucifix which

lay on her bed, pressed it to her lips, and died. The expression of her fixed eyes still makes me shudder when I think of it. I brought away the will. When it was opened I found that Madame de Merret had appointed me her executor. She bequeathed her whole property to the hospital of Vendôme, save and excepting certain bequests. The following disposition was made of La Grande Bretèche. I was directed to leave it in the state in which it was at the time of her death for a period of fifty years from the date of her decease; I was to forbid all access to it, by any and everyone, no matter who; to make no repairs, and to put by from her estate a yearly sum to pay watchers, if they were necessary, to insure the faithful execution of these intentions. At the expiration of that time the estate was, if the testatrix's will had been carried out in all particulars, to belong to my heirs (because, as monsieur is doubtless well aware, notaries are forbidden by law to receive legacies); if otherwise, then La Grande Bretèche was to go to whoever might establish a right to it, but on condition of fulfilling certain orders contained in a codicil annexed to the will and not to be opened until the expiration of the fifty years. The will has never been attacked, consequently—'

"Here the oblong notary, without finishing his sentence, looked at me triumphantly. I made him perfectly happy with a few compliments.

" 'Monsieur,' I said, in conclusion, 'you have so deeply impressed the scene upon me that I seem to see the dying woman, whiter than the sheets; those glittering eyes horrify me; I shall dream of her all night. But you must have formed some conjectures as to the notive of that extraordinary will.'

" 'Monsieur,' he replied, with comical reserve, 'I never permit myself to judge of the motives of those who honour me with the gift of a diamond.'

"However, I managed to unloose the tongue of the scrupulous notary so far that he told me, not without long digressions, certain opinions on the matter emanating from the wise-heads of both sexes whose judgments made the social law of Vendôme. But these opinions and observations were so contradictory, so diffuse, that I well nigh went to sleep in spite of the interest I felt in this authentic story. The heavy manner and monotonous accent of the notary, who was no doubt in the habit of listening to himself and making his clients and compatriots listen to him, triumphed over my curiosity. Happily, he did at last go away.

" 'Ha, ha! monsieur,' he said to me at the head of the stairs, 'many persons would like to live their forty-five years longer, but, one moment!' —here he laid the forefinger of his right hand on his nose as if he meant to say, Now pay atten-

tion to this!—'in order to do that, to do *that,* they ought to skip the sixties.'

"I shut my door, the notary's jest, which he thought very witty, having drawn me from my apathy; then I sat down in my armchair and put both feet on the andirons. I was plunged in a romance *à la* Radcliffe, based on the notarial disclosures of Monsieur Regnault, when my door, softly opened by the hand of a woman, turned noiselessly on its hinges.

"I saw my landlady, a jovial, stout woman, with a fine, good-humoured face, who had missed her true surroundings; she was from Flanders, and might have stepped out of a picture by Teniers.

" 'Well, monsieur,' she said, 'Monsieur Regnault has no doubt recited to you his famous tale of La Grande Bretèche?'

" 'Yes, Madame Lepas.'

" 'What did he tell you?'

"I repeated in a few words the dark and chilling story of Madame de Merret as imparted to me by the notary. At each sentence my landlady ran out her chin and looked at me with the perspicacity of an inn-keeper, which combines the instinct of a policeman, the astuteness of a spy, and the cunning of a shopkeeper.

" 'My dear Madame Lepas,' I added, in conclusion, 'you evidently know more than that. If not, why did you come up here to me?'

" 'On the word, now, of an honest woman, just as true as my name is Lepas—'

" 'Don't swear, for your eyes are full of the secret. You knew Monsieur de Merret. What sort of man was he?'

" 'Goodness! Monsieur de Merret? Well, you see, he was a handsome man, so tall you never could see the top of him,—a very worthy gentleman from Picardy, who had, as you may say, a temper of his own; and he knew it. He paid everyone in cash so as to have no quarrels. But, I tell you, he could be quick. Our ladies thought him very pleasant.'

" 'Because of his temper?' I asked.

" 'Perhaps,' she replied. 'You know, monsieur, a man must have something to the fore, as they say, to marry a lady like Madame de Merret, who, without disparaging others, was the handsomest and the richest woman in Vendôme. She had an income of nearly twenty thousand francs. All the town was at the wedding. The bride was so dainty and captivating, a real little jewel of a woman. Ah! they were a fine couple in those days!'

" 'Was their home a happy one?'

" 'Hum, hum! yes and no, as far as anyone can say; for you know very well enough that the like of us don't live hand and glove with the like of them. Madame de Merret was a good

woman and very charming, who no doubt had to bear a good deal from her husband's temper; we all liked her though she was rather haughty. Bah! that was her bringing up, and she was born so. When people are noble—don't you see?'

" 'Yes, but there must have been some terrible catastrophe, for Monsieur and Madame de Merret to separate violently.'

" 'I never said there was a catastrophe, monsieur; I know nothing about it.'

" 'Very good; now I am certain that you know all.'

" 'Well, monsieur, I'll tell you all I do know. When I saw Monsieur Regnault coming after you I knew he would tell you about Madame de Merret and La Grande Bretèche; and that gave me the idea of consulting monsieur, who seems to be a gentleman of good sense, incapable of betraying a poor woman like me, who has never done harm to anyone, but who is, somehow, troubled in her conscience. I have never dared to say a word to the people about here, for they are all gossips, with tongues like steel blades. And there's never been a traveller who has stayed as long as you have, monsieur, to whom I could tell all about the fifteen thousand francs—'

" 'My dear Madame Lepas,' I replied, trying to stop the flow of words, 'if your confidence is

of a nature to compromise me, I wouldn't hear it for worlds.'

" 'Oh, don't be afraid,' she said, interrupting me. 'You'll see—'

"This haste to tell made me quite certain I was not the first to whom my good landlady had communicated the secret of which I was to be the sole repository, so I listened.

" 'Monsieur,' she said, 'when the Emperor sent the Spanish and other prisoners of war to Vendôme I lodged one of them (at the cost of the government),—a young Spaniard on parole. But in spite of his parole he had to report every day to the sub-prefect. He was a grandee of Spain, with a name that ended in *os* and in *dia,* like all Spaniards—Bagos de Férédia. I wrote his name on the register, and you can see it if you like. Oh, he was a handsome young fellow for a Spaniard, who, they tell me, are all ugly. He wasn't more than five feet two or three inches, but he was well made. He had pretty little hands which he took care of—ah, you should just have seen him! He had as many brushes for those hands as a woman has for her head. He had fine black hair, a fiery eye, a rather copper-coloured skin, but it was pleasant to look at all the same. He wore the finest linen I ever saw on any one, and I have lodged princesses, and, among others, General Bertrand, the Duc and Duchesse d'Abrantès, Monsieur De-

cazes, and the King of Spain. He didn't eat much; but he had such polite manners and was always so amiable that I couldn't find fault with him. Oh! I did really love him, though he never said four words a day to me; if anyone spoke to him, he never answered,—that's an oddity those grandees have, a sort of mania, so I'm told. He read his breviary like a priest, and he went to mass and to all the services regularly. Where do you think he sat? close to the chapel of Madame de Merret. But as he took that place the first time he went to church nobody attached any importance to the fact, though it was remembered later. Besides, he never took his eyes off his prayer-book, poor young man!"

"My jovial landlady paused a moment, overcome with her recollections; then she continued her tale:

" 'From that time on, monsieur, he used to walk up the mountain every evening to the ruins of the castle. It was his only amusement, poor man! and I dare say it recalled his own country; they say Spain is all mountains. From the first he was always late at night in coming in. I used to be uneasy at never seeing him before the stroke of midnight; but we got accustomed to his ways and gave him a key to the door, so that we didn't have to sit up. It so happened that one of our grooms told us that one evening when he went to bathe his horses

he thought he saw the grandee in the distance, swimming in the river like a fish. When he came in I told him he had better take care not to get entangled in the sedges; he seemed annoyed that anyone had seen him in the water. Well, monsieur, one day, or rather, one morning, we did not find him in his room; he had not come in. He never returned. I looked about and into everything, and at last I found a writing in a table drawer where he had put away fifty of those Spanish gold coins called "portugaise," which bring a hundred francs apiece; there were also diamonds worth ten thousand francs sealed up in a little box. The paper said that in case he should not return some day, he bequeathed to us the money and the diamonds, with a request to found masses of thanksgiving to God for his escape and safety. In those days my husband was living, and he did everything he could to find the young man. But, it was the queerest thing! he found only the Spaniard's clothes under a big stone in a sort of shed on the banks of the river, on the castle side, just opposite to La Grande Bretèche. My husband went so early in the morning that no one saw him. He burned the clothes after we had read the letter, and gave out, as Comte Férédia requested, that he had fled. The sub-prefect sent the whole gendarmerie on his traces, but bless your heart! they never caught him. Lepas thought the Spaniard

had drowned himself. But, monsieur, I never thought so. I think he was somehow mixed up in Madame de Merret's trouble; and I'll tell you why. Rosalie has told me that her mistress had a crucifix she valued so much that she was buried with it, and it was made of ebony and silver; now when Monsieur de Férédia first came to lodge with us he had just such a crucifix, but I soon missed it. Now, monsieur, what do you say? isn't it true that I need have no remorse about those fifteen thousand francs? are they not rightfully mine?'

" 'Of course they are. But how is it you have never questioned Rosalie?' I said.

" 'Oh, I have, monsieur; but I can get nothing out of her. That girl is a stone wall. She knows something, but there is no making her talk.'

"After a few more remarks, my landlady left me, a prey to a romantic curiosity, to vague and darkling thoughts, to a religious terror that was something like the awe which comes upon us when we enter by night a gloomy church and see in the distance beneath the arches a feeble light; a formless figure glides before us, the sweep of a robe—of priest or woman—is heard; we shudder. La Grande Bretèche, with its tall grasses, its shuttered windows, its rusty railings, its barred gates, its deserted rooms, rose fantastically and suddenly before me. I tried to pene-

trate that mysterious dwelling and seek the knot of this most solemn history, this drama which had killed three persons.

"Rosalie became to my eyes the most interesting person in Vendôme. Examining her, I discovered the traces of an ever-present inward thought. In spite of the health which bloomed upon her dimpled face, there was in her some element of remorse, or of hope; her attitude bespoke a secret, like that of devotees who pray with ardour, or that of a girl who has killed her child and for ever after hears its cry. And yet her postures were naïve, and even vulgar; her silly smile was surely not criminal; you would have judged her innocent if only by the large neckerchief of blue and red squares which covered her vigorous bust, clothed, confined, and set off by a gown of purple and white stripes. 'No,' thought I; 'I will not leave Vendôme without knowing the history of La Grande Bretèche. I'll even make love to Rosalie, if it is absolutely necessary.'

" 'Rosalie!' I said to her one day.

" 'What is it, monsieur?'

" 'You are not married, are you?'

"She trembled slightly.

" 'Oh! when the fancy takes me to be unhappy there'll be no lack of men,' she said, laughing.

"She recovered instantly from her emotion, whatever it was; for all women, from the great lady to the chambermaid of an inn, have a self-possession of their own.

" 'You are fresh enough and taking enough to please a lover,' I said, watching her. 'But tell me, Rosalie, why did you take a place at an inn after you left Madame de Merret? Didn't she leave you an annuity?'

" 'Oh, yes, she did. But, monsieur, my place is the best in all Vendôme.'

"This answer was evidently what judges and lawyers call 'dilatory.' Rosalie's position in this romantic history was like that of a square on a checkerboard; she was at the very centre, as it were, of its truth and its interest; she seemed to me to be tied into the knot of it. The last chapter of the tale was in her, and, from the moment that I realized this, Rosalie became to me an object of attraction. By dint of studying the girl I came to find in her, as we do in every woman whom we make a principal object of our attention, that she had a host of good qualities. She was clean, and careful of herself, and therefore handsome. Some two or three weeks after the notary's visit I said to her, suddenly: 'Tell me all you know about Madame de Merret.'

" 'Oh, no!' she replied, in a tone of terror, 'don't ask me that, monsieur.'

"I persisted in urging her. Her pretty face darkened, her bright colour faded, her eyes lost their innocent, liquid light.

" 'Well!' she said, after a pause, 'if you will have it so, I will tell you; but keep the secret.'

" 'I'll keep it with the faithfulness of a thief, which is the most loyal to be found anywhere.'

" 'If it is the same to you, monsieur, I'd rather you kept it with your own.'

"Thereupon, she adjusted her neckerchief and posed herself to tell the tale; for it is very certain that an attitude of confidence and security is desirable in order to make a narration. The best tales are told at special hours,—like that in which we are now at table. No one ever told a story well, standing or fasting.

"If I were to reproduce faithfully poor Rosalie's diffuse eloquence, a whole volume would scarce suffice. But as the event of which she now gave me a hazy knowledge falls into place between the facts revealed by the garrulity of the notary, and that of Madame Lepas, as precisely as the mean terms of an arithmetical proposition lie between its two extremes, all I have to do is to tell it to you in a few words. I therefore give a summary of what I heard from Rosalie.

"The chamber which Madame de Merret occupied at La Grande Bretèche was on the ground floor. A small closet about four feet in depth was made in the wall, and served as a ward-

robe. Three months before the evening when the facts I am about to relate to you happened, Madame de Merret had been so seriously unwell that her husband left her alone in her room and slept himself in a chamber on the first floor. By one of those mere chances which it is impossible to foresee, he returned, on the evening in question, two hours later than usual from the club where he went habitually to read the papers and talk politics with the inhabitants of the town. His wife thought him at home and in bed and asleep. But the invasion of France had been the subject of a lively discussion; the game of billiards was a heated one; he had lost forty francs, an enormous sum for Vendôme, where everybody hoards his money, and where manners and customs are restrained within modest limits worthy of all praise,—which may, perhaps, be the source of a certain true happiness which no Parisian cares anything at all about.

"For some time past Monsieur de Merret had been in the habit of asking Rosalie, when he came in, if his wife were in bed. Being told, invariably, that she was, he at once went to his own room with the contentment that comes of confidence and custom. This evening, on returning home, he took it into his head to go to Madame de Merret's room and tell her his ill-luck, perhaps to be consoled for it. During dinner he had noticed that his wife was coquettishly

dressed; and as he came from the club the thought crossed his mind that she was no longer ill, that her convalescence had made her lovelier than ever,—a fact he perceived, as husbands are wont to perceive things, too late.

"Instead of calling Rosalie, who at that moment was in the kitchen watching a complicated game of 'brisque,' at which the cook and the coachman were playing, Monsieur de Merret went straight to his wife's room by the light of his lantern, which he had placed on the first step of the stairway. His step, which was easily recognized, resounded under the arches of the corridor. Just as he turned the handle of his wife's door he fancied he heard the door of the closet, which I mentioned to you, shut; but when he entered, Madame de Merret was alone, standing before the fireplace. The husband thought to himself that Rosalie must be in the closet; and yet a suspicion, which sounded in his ears like the ringing of bells, made him distrustful. He looked at his wife, and fancied he saw something wild and troubled in her eyes.

"'You are late in coming home,' she said. That voice, usually so pure and gracious, seemed to him slightly changed.

"Monsieur de Merret made no answer, for at that moment Rosalie entered the room. Her appearance was a thunderbolt to him. He walked up and down the room with his arms crossed.

going from one window to another with a uniform movement.

" 'Have you heard anything to trouble you?' asked his wife, timidly, while Rosalie was undressing her. He made no answer.

" 'You can leave the room,' said Madame de Merret to the maid. 'I will arrange my hair myself.'

"She guessed some misfortune at the mere sight of her husband's face, and wished to be alone with him.

"When Rosalie was gone, or supposed to be gone, for she went no farther than the corridor, Monsieur de Merret came to his wife and stood before her. Then he said, coldly:

" 'Madame, there is someone in your closet.'

"She looked at her husband with a calm air, and answered, 'No, monsieur.'

"That 'no' agonized Monsieur de Merret, for he did not believe it. And yet his wife had never seemed purer nor more saintly than she did at that moment. He rose and went toward the closet to open the door; Madame de Merret took him by the hand and stopped him; she looked at him with a sad air and said, in a voice that was strangely shaken: 'If you find no one, remember that all is over between us.'

"The infinite dignity of his wife's demeanour restored her husband's respect for her, and suddenly inspired him with one of those resolutions

which need some wider field to become immortal.

"'No, Josephine,' he said, 'I will not look there. In either case we should be separated for ever. Listen to me: I know the purity of your soul, I know that you lead a saintly life; you would not commit a mortal sin to save yourself from death.'

"At these words, Madame de Merret looked at her husband with a haggard eye.

"'Here is your crucifix,' he went on. 'Swear to me before God that there is no one in that closet and I will believe you: I will not open that door.'

"Madame de Merret took the crucifix and said, 'I swear it.'

"'Louder!' said her husband: 'repeat after me,—I swear before God that there is no person in that closet.'

"She repeated the words composedly.

"'That is well,' said Monsieur de Merret, coldly. After a moment's silence he added, examining the ebony crucifix inlaid with silver, 'That is a beautiful thing: I did not know you possessed it; it is very artistically wrought.'

"'I found it at Duvivier's," she replied; 'he bought it of a Spanish monk when those prisoners-of-war passed through Vendôme last year.'

"'Ah!' said Monsieur de Merret, replacing the crucifix on the wall. He rang the bell. Rosalie was not long in answering it. Monsieur de

Merret went quickly up to her, took her into the recess of a window on the garden side, and said to her in a low voice:

"'I am told that Gorenflot wants to marry you, and that poverty alone prevents it, for you have told him you will not be his wife until he is a master-mason. Is that so?"

"'Yes, monsieur.'

"'Well, go and find him; tell him to come here at once and bring his trowel and other tools. Take care not to wake anyone at his house but himself; he will soon have enough money to satisfy you. No talking to anyone when you leave this room, mind, or—'

"He frowned. Rosalie left the room. He called her back; 'Here, take my pass-key,' he said.

"Monsieur de Merret, who had kept his wife in view while giving these orders, now sat down beside her before the fire and began to tell her of his game of billiards, and the political discussions of the club. When Rosalie returned she found Monsieur and Madame de Merret talking amicably.

"The master had lately had the ceilings of all the reception rooms on the lower floor restored. Plaster is very scarce at Vendôme, and the carriage of it makes it expensive. Monsieur de Merret had therefore ordered an ample quantity for his own wants, knowing that he could readily find buyers for what was left. This cir-

cumstance inspired the idea that now possessed him.

"'Monsieur, Gorenflot has come,' said Rosalie.

"'Bring him in,' said her master.

"Madame de Merret turned slightly pale when she saw the mason.

"'Gorenflot,' said her husband, 'fetch some bricks from the coach-house,—enough to wall up that door; use the plaster that was left over to cover the wall.'

"Then he called Rosalie and the mason to the end of the room, and, speaking in a low voice, added, 'Listen to me, Gorenflot; after you have done this work you will sleep in the house; and to-morrow morning I will give you a passport into a foreign country, and six thousand francs for the journey. Go through Paris where I will meet you. There, I will secure to you legally another six thousand francs, to be paid to you at the end of ten years if you still remain out of France. For this sum, I demand absolute silence on what you see and do this night. As for you, Rosalie, I give you a dowry of ten thousand francs, on condition that you marry Gorenflot, and keep silence, if not—'

"'Rosalie,' said Madame de Merret, 'come and brush my hair.'

"The husband walked up and down the room, watching the door, the mason, and his wife, but

without allowing the least distrust or misgiving to appear in his manner. Gorenflot's work made some noise; under cover of it Madame de Merret said hastily to Rosalie, while her husband was at the farther end of the room: 'A thousand francs annuity if you tell Gorenflot to leave a crevice at the bottom'; then aloud she added, composedly, 'Go and help the mason.'

"Monsieur and Madame de Merret remained silent during the whole time it took Gorenflot to wall up the door. The silence was intentional on the part of the husband to deprive his wife of all chance of saying words with a double meaning which might be heard within the closet; with Madame de Merret it was either prudence or pride.

"When the wall was more than half up, the mason's tool broke one of the panes of glass in the closet door; Monsieur de Merret's back was at that moment turned away. The action proved to Madame de Merret that Rosalie had spoken to the mason. In that one instant she saw the dark face of a man with black hair and fiery eyes. Before her husband turned the poor creature had time to make a sign with her head which meant 'Hope.'

"By four o'clock, just at dawn, for it was in the month of September, the work was done. Monsieur de Merret remained that night in his wife's room. The next morning, on rising, he

said, carelessly: 'Ah! I forgot, I must go to the mayor's office about that passport.'

"He put on his hat, made three steps to the door, then checked himself, turned back, and took the crucifix.

"His wife trembled with joy; 'He will go to Duvivier's," she thought.

"The moment her husband had left the house she rang for Rosalie. 'The pick-ax!' she cried, 'the pick-ax! I watched how Gorenflot did it; we shall have time to make a hole and close it again.'

"In an instant Rosalie had brought a sort of cleaver, and her mistress, with a fury no words can describe, began to demolish the wall. She had knocked away a few bricks, and was drawing back to strike a still more vigorous blow with all her strength, when she saw her husband behind her. She fainted.

" 'Put madame on her bed,' said her husband, coldly.

"Foreseeing what would happen, he had laid this trap for his wife; he had written to the mayor, and sent for Duvivier. The jeweller arrived just as the room had been again put in order.

" 'Duvivier,' said Monsieur de Merret, 'I think you bought some crucifixes of those Spaniards who were here last year?'

" 'No, monsieur, I did not.'

"'Very good; thank you,' he said, with a tigerish glance at his wife. 'Jean,' he added to the footman, 'serve my meals in Madame de Merret's bedroom; she is very ill, and I shall not leave her till she recovers.'

"For twenty days that man remained beside his wife. During the first hours, when sounds were heard behind the walled door, and Josephine tried to implore mercy for the dying stranger, he answered, without allowing her to utter a word:

"'You swore upon the cross that no one was there.'"

As the tale ended the women rose from table, and the spell under which Bianchon had held them was broken. Nevertheless, several of them were conscious of a cold chill as they recalled the last words.

HONORÉ DE BALZAC.

SIMON, SON OF SIMON

SIMON, son of Simon, was nearing the end of his career without having tasted the fruits of his untiring effort to acquire the riches which may be said to represent happiness. Whether we be the sons of Shem or of Japheth, each of us strives for the representative symbol of the satisfaction of his particular cravings. Not that Simon, son of Simon, of the tribe of Judah, had ever given much thought to the joys that were to come from his possession of treasure. No, the question of the possible use to be made of a pile of money had never occupied his active but simple mind. The satisfaction of money-lust having been his single aim, he had never looked forward to any enjoyment other than that of successful money getting. Fine raiment appealed to him not at all. The safest thing, after snaring wealth on the wing, is to conceal it under poverty, lest we lead into temptation the wicked, ever ready to appropriate the goods of their neighbours. Jewels, rare gems, precious vessels, delicate porcelain, rugs, tapestries, luxurious dwellings, horses, none of these awakened his desire. He

cared nothing for them, and had no understanding of the vainglorious joys to be derived from their possession. Neither did he yearn for fair persons—sometimes containing a soul—obtainable at a price for ineffable delight. Simon, son of Simon, had a very vague notion of the esthetic superiority of one daughter of Eve above another, and would not have given a farthing for the difference between any two of them.

His ingenuous desire was concerned solely with coined metal. Gold, silver, bronze, cut into disks and stamped with an effigy, seemed to him, as in fact they are, the greatest marvel of the world. The thought of collecting them, carefully counted in bags—making high brown, white, or yellow piles of them in coffers with intricate locks—filled him with superhuman joy. And so great is the miracle of metal, even when absent and represented only by a sheet of paper supplied with the necessary formulæ and bearing imposing signatures along with the stamp of Cæsar, that the delight of it in that form was no less. Some, with a cultivated taste in such matters, tell us indeed that the delight is enhanced by the thought of safeguarding from the world's cupidity so great a treasure in a bulk so small.

All of this, however, Simon, son of Simon, had tasted only in dream visions, finding it infinitely delectable even so. How would he have felt, had reality kept pace with the flight of a delirious

imagination? But such happiness seemed not to be the portion of the miserable Jew, who had so far vainly exerted himself to win gold. Gold for the sake of gold, not for the vain pleasures, the empty shell, for which fools give it in exchange. Gold was beautiful, gold was mighty, gold was sovereign of the world. If Simon, son of Simon, had attempted to picture Jehovah, he would have conceived of him as gold stretching out to infinity, filling all space! Meanwhile, he trailed shocking old slippers through the mud of his Galician village, and arrayed himself in a greasy, ragged garment on which the far-spaced clean places stood out like spots. He was a poor man, you would have thought him an afflicted one, but the golden rays of an indefatigable hope lighted his life.

He walked by the guidance of a star, the golden star of a dream which would end only with the dreamer. He was always busy. Always on the eve of some lucky stroke. Never on the day after it. The things he had attempted, the combinations he had constructed, the traps he had set for human folly, would worthily fill a volume. It seemed as if his genius lacked nothing necessary for success. Yet he always failed, and had acquired a reputation for bad luck. He had travelled much, taken part in large enterprises, to which he contributed ideas that proved profitable to someone else. He could buy and sell on

the largest or the smallest scale. He dealt in every ware that is sold in the open market as well as every one that is bargained for in secret, from honours—and honour—to living flesh, from glory to love. And now, here he was, stripped of illusions—I mean illusions on the subject of his fellowman—dreaming for the thousandth time of holding a winning hand in the game.

The sole confidant of his dreams was his son Ochosias, a youth of great promise, initiated by him into all the mysteries of commerce. Ochosias profited by his lessons and was not lacking in gifts, but never rose to his father's sublime heights. He had a preference for the money trade.

"Money," said he, "is the finest merchandise of all. Purchase, sale, loan, are all profitable for one knowing how to handle it. If you will give your consent, Father, I will establish myself as a banker—by the week."

"You are crazy," answered Simon, son of Simon. "The money trade certainly has advantages perceptible even to the dullest wit. But in order to deal with capital, capital you must have, or else find some innocent Gentile to lend it you at an easy rate. Before doing this, however, he will ask for securities. Where are your securities?"

And as the other shrugged his shoulders—

"Listen," continued the man of experience, "the time has come to submit to you a plan that

has been haunting me and from which I expect a rare profit."

"Speak, speak, Father," cried Ochosias, eagerly, with such a racial quiver at the words "rare profit" as a war-horse's at a bugle call.

"Listen," said Simon with deliberation, "I have long revolved in my mind the history of my life. I can say without vanity that nowhere is Simon, son of Simon, surpassed in business ability. Should you, Ochosias, live to be the age of the patriarchs, you might meet with one more fortunate than your father, but one more expert in trade—never. And yet I have not been successful . . . at least, not up to the present time. For the future is in the hands of Jehovah alone by whom all things are decided."

The two men bowed devoutly in token of submission to the Lord.

"What, then, has been wanting?" continued Simon, son of Simon, following up his thought. "Nothing within myself, I say it without any uncertainty as to my pride being justifiable. Nothing within myself, everything outside of myself. It is no secret. Everyone proclaims it aloud. Ask anybody you please. Everyone will tell you: 'Simon, son of Simon, is no ordinary Jew.' Some will even add: 'He is the greatest Jew of his time.' I do not go as far as that. We must always leave room for another. But you will find opinion unanimous in respect to one

curious statement: 'Simon, son of Simon, has no luck. All that he had lacked is luck.' There you have the simple truth. There is nothing further to say."

"Well——?" inquired Ochosias, breathlessly, scenting something new in the air.

"Well, one must have luck, that is the secret, and, I tell you plainly, I mean to have it."

"How?"

"It is within reach of all, my child. You cannot fail to see it. A state institution, through the care of the Emperor Francis Joseph, Christian of Christ, distributes good luck impartially to every subject of the Empire, whether Christian, Jew, or Mahomedan."

"The lottery?" asked Ochosias, and pouted his lips disdainfully.

"The lottery, you have said it, the lottery which graciously offers us every day a chance of which we neglect to avail ourselves."

"Unless, of course," mused the youth, with a brightening countenance, "you know of some way to draw the winning number—"

"Good. I was sure that blood would presently speak. You are not far from guessing right."

"But, come now. Seriously. You know of some such means?"

"Perhaps. Tell me, who is the master of luck?"

"Jehovah. You yourself just said so."

"Yes, Jehovah, or some god of the outsiders,

if any there be mightier than Jehovah, which I cannot believe."

"Other gods may be mighty, like Baal, or like Mammon, who ought by no means to be despised. But Jehovah is the greatest of all. He said: 'I am the Eternal.' And He is."

"Doubtless. There are, however, more mysteries in this world than we can grasp, and Jehovah permits strange usurpations by other Celestial Powers."

"It is for the purpose of trying us."

"I believe it to be so. But I have no more time to waste in mistakes. And so I have said to myself: 'Adonai, the Master, holds luck in his hands. According to my belief, that master is Jehovah. He just might, however, be Christ, or Allah, or another. I shall, if necessary, exhaust the dictionary of the gods of mankind, which is, I am told, a bulky volume. Whoever is the mightiest god, him must we tempt, seduce, or, to speak plainly, buy.' That is what I have resolved to do. I shall naturally begin the experiment with Jehovah, the God of Abraham and of Solomon, whom I worship above all others. To-morrow is the Sabbath. To-day I will go and purchase a ticket for the imperial lottery, the grand prize of which is five hundred thousand florins, and to-morrow, bowed beneath the veil, in the temple of the Lord, I shall promise to give him, if I win—"

"Ten thousand florins!" Ochosias bravely proposed.

"Ten thousand grains of sand!" cried Simon, son of Simon. "Would you be stingy toward your Creator? Ten thousand florins! Do you think that in the world we live in one can subsidize a divinity, a first-class one, for that price? Triple donkey! Know that I shall offer Jehovah one hundred thousand florins! What do you think of it? That is how one behaves when he is moved by religious sentiments."

The amazed Ochosias was silent. After a pause, however, he murmured:

"You are right, Father, in these days one cannot get a god, a real one, under that figure. But a hundred thousand florins! You must own that it is frightful to hand over such a pile of money even to Jehovah."

"Ochosias, in business one must know how to be lavish. With your ten thousand florins I should never win the grand prize. Whilst with my hundred thousand—We shall see."

And Simon, son of Simon, did as he had said. He bought his lottery ticket, he took a solemn oath before the Thorah to devote, should be win, a hundred thousand florins to Jehovah, and then he waited quietly for three months, to learn that his was not the winning number.

Ochosias and Simon, son of Simon, thereupon deliberated. To which god should they next

turn their attention? For some reason Jehovah had lost power. Was it possible that the centuries had strengthened some other god against him? Strange things happen. Still, Ochosias ventured the suggestion that Jehovah with the best will in the world might have been bound by some previous engagement.

"Any other Jew to have promised a hundred thousand florins to the Eternal?" uttered Simon, son of Simon, sententiously. "No! I am the only one capable of a stroke of business such as that!"

But upon the insistence of Ochosias, whose faith in Jehovah remained unshaken, he was willing to try again. This time he waited six months . . . with the same result.

It then became necessary to make a decision, and the two men agreed that after Jehovah the honour of the next trial was due to his son Jesus, a Jew, offspring of the Jew Joseph and the Jewess Mary. So Simon, son of Simon, bought another lottery ticket and hastened to the church of Christ where, having been properly sprinkled with holy water, he knelt according to the custom of the place, and pledged himself solemnly, in case he won the grand prize, to present the Crucified with a hundred thousand florins. Having given his word, Simon, son of Simon, looked all around him in the hope of some sign, but seeing nothing that could concern him he retired, not without repeating his promise and

gratifying the Deity with a few supplementary genuflexions.

Time passed. Simon, son of Simon, and Ochosias went about their ordinary occupations, taking great care to utter no word that could give offence to the Power whose favour they were seeking. Jehovah remained during this long period exiled, as it were, from their thoughts. What if the Other should be jealous?

And then, of a sudden, the miracle! Simon, son of Simon, won the grand prize. At first he doubted, fearing some trick of the invisible powers. But in the end he was obliged to accept the evidence. The Most Catholic bank paid the money, and soon the five hundred thousand florins were safely bestowed.

After a few twitches of nervous trembling, Simon, son of Simon, regained command over himself. But he was visibly sunk in deep thought, Vainly the agitated Ochosias plied him with questions. Such answers as he obtained were vague and unsatisfactory. "Oh," and "Ah," and "Perhaps," and "We shall see," which in no wise revealed what lay in the other's mind. Finally, Ochosias could no longer restrain himself. He must know what was going on in his father's soul, for his own was torn by a dreadful doubt. The genius of Simon, son of Simon, was marvellous, it had opened the way for him to recalcitrant fortune, and in the natural course of things

he, Ochosias, would presently through death's agency be placed in possession of the treasure. But here was a difficulty. Could one grant that Jehovah had no power left and that Christ was all-powerful? Ochosias shuddered at the thought, for, after all, if Christ had greater power than the One who was formerly all-powerful, if supreme power had devolved upon Christ, then to Christ must one bow. Conversion would be inevitable. To leave the temple of Jehovah for the altars of his enemy and pay, into the bargain, an enormous fee? Horrible!

In hesitating and fragmentary talk Ochosias made the sorrowful avowal of his anguish.

"Must we believe that Jesus is mightier than Jehovah? What consequences would such a belief involve! Is it possible that the religion of Jesus is the true one? No, no, it cannot be! What are your thoughts on the subject, Father?"

"Man of little faith, who hast doubted," spoke Simon, son of Simon, softly with a flash as of lightning in his eye. "Let me reassure thee who have not doubted. Clearly I perceive the true significance of events. Jehovah is not one whom we can deceive even unintentionally. To Him all things are known. He foresees all, and works accordingly. The proof that He is mightier than Jesus is that he perfectly understood on both occasions that I should never be able to part with the hundred thousand florins I so rashly prom-

ised. He knows our hearts. He does not expect the impossible. The Other was taken in by my good faith, which deceived even myself. Jehovah alone is great, my son."

"Jehovah alone is great," repeated Ochosias, his soul divinely eased by the lifting off it of a great weight.

And both men, with foreheads bowed before the Almighty, worshipped.

GEORGES CLEMENCEAU.

THE NECKLACE

SHE was one of those pretty, charming girls who are sometimes, as if through the irony of fate, born into a family of clerks. She was without dowry or expectations, and had no means of becoming known, appreciated, loved, wedded, by any rich or influential man; so she allowed herself to be married to a small clerk belonging to the Ministry of Public Instruction. She dressed plainly because she could not afford to dress well, and was unhappy because she felt she had dropped from her proper station, which for women is a matter of attractiveness, beauty, and grace, rather than of family descent. Good manners, an intuitive knowledge of what is elegant, nimbleness of wit, are the only requirements necessary to place a woman of the people on an equality with one of the aristocracy.

She fretted constantly, feeling all things delicate and luxurious to be her birthright. She suffered on account of the meagreness of her surroundings, the bareness of the walls, the tarnished furniture, the ugly curtains; deficiencies which would have left any other woman of her class untouched, irritated and tormented her. The

sight of the little Breton peasant who did her humble housework engendered hopeless regrets followed by fantastic dreams. She thought of a noiseless, hallowed ante-room, with Oriental carpets, lighted with tall branching candlesticks of bronze and of two big, knee-breeched footmen, drowsy from the stove-heated air, dozing in great armchairs. She thought of a long drawing room hung with ancient brocade, of a beautiful cabinet holding priceless curios, of an alluring, scented boudoir intended for five-o'clock chats with intimates, with men famous and courted, and whose acquaintance is longed for by all women.

When she sat down to dinner, at the round table spread with a cloth three days old, opposite her husband who uncovered the tureen, and exclaimed with ecstasy, "Ah, I like a good stew! I know nothing to beat this!" she thought of dainty dinners, of shining plate, of tapestry which peopled the walls with human shapes, and with strange birds flying among fairy trees. And then she thought of delicious viands served in costly dishes, and of murmured gallantries which you listen to with a comfortable smile while you are eating the rose-tinted flesh of a trout or the wing of a quail.

She had no handsome gowns, no jewels—nothing, though these were her whole life; it was these that meant existence to her. She would so have liked to please, to be thought fascinating,

to be envied, to be sought out. She had a friend, a former schoolmate at the convent, who was rich, but whom she did not like to go to see any more because she would come home jealous, covetous.

But one evening her husband returned home jubilant, holding a large envelope in his hand.

"Here is something for you," he said.

She tore open the cover sharply, and drew out a printed card bearing these words: "The Minister of Public Instruction and Mme. Georges Ramponneau request the honour of M. and Mme. Loisel's company at the palace of the Ministry on Monday evening, January 18th."

Instead of being delighted as her husband expected, she threw the invitation on the table with disgust, muttering, "What do you think I can do with that?"

"But, my dear, I thought you would be pleased. You never go anywhere, and this is such a rare opportunity. I had hard work to get it. Every one is wild to go; it is very select, and invitations to clerks are scarce. The whole official world will be there."

She looked at him with a scornful eye, as she said petulantly, "And what have I to put on my back?" He had not thought of that. He stammered, "Why, the dress you wear to the theatre; it looks all right to me."

He stopped in despair, seeing his wife was crying. Two big tears rolled down from the corners of her eyes to the corners of her mouth.

"What's the matter? What's the matter?" he faltered.

With great effort, she controlled herself, and replied coldly, while she dried her wet cheeks:

"Nothing, except that I have no dress, and, for that reason, cannot go to the ball. Give your invitation to some fellow-clerk whose wife is better provided than I am."

He was dumbfounded, but replied:

"Come, Mathilde, let us see now—how much would a suitable dress cost; one you could wear at other times—something quite simple?"

She pondered several moments, calculating, and guessing, too, how much she could safely ask for without an instant refusal or bringing down upon her head a volley of objections from her frugal husband.

At length she said hesitatingly, "I can't say exactly, but I think I could do with four hundred francs."

He changed colour because he was laying aside just that sum to buy a gun and treat himself to a little shooting next summer on the plain of Nanterre, with several friends, who went down there on Sundays to shoot larks. Nevertheless, he said: "Very well, I will give you four hundred francs. Get a pretty dress."

The day of the ball drew near, and Mme. Loisel seemed despondent, nervous, upset, though her dress was all ready. One evening her husband observed: "I say, what is the matter, Mathilde? You have been very queer lately." And she replied, "It exasperates me not to have a single ornament of any kind to put on. I shall look like a fright—I would almost rather stay at home." He answered: "Why not wear flowers? They are very fashionable at this time of the year. You can get a handful of fine roses for ten francs."

But she was not persuaded. "No, it's so mortifying to look poverty-stricken among women who are rich."

Then her husband exclaimed: "How slow you are! Go and see your friend, Mme. Forestier, and ask her to lend you some jewels. You know her well enough to do that."

She gave an exclamation of delight: "True! I never thought of that!"

Next day she went to her friend and poured out her woes. Mme. Forestier went to a closet with a glass door, took out a large jewel-box, brought it back, opened it, and said to Mme. Loisel, "Here, take your choice, my dear."

She looked at some bracelets, then at a pearl necklace, and then at a Venetian cross curiously wrought of gold and precious stones. She tried on the ornaments before the mirror, hesitated,

was loath to take them off and return them. She kept inquiring, "Have you any more?"

"Certain, look for yourself. I don't know what you want."

Suddenly Mathilde discovered, in a black satin box, a magnificent necklace of diamonds, and her heart began to beat with excitement. With trembling hands she took the necklace and fastened it round her neck outside her dress, becoming lost in admiration of herself as she looked in the glass. Tremulous with fear lest she be refused, she asked, "Will you lend me this—only this?"

"Yes, of course I will."

Mathilde fell upon her friend's neck, kissed her passionately, and rushed off with her treasure.

The day of the ball arrived.

Mme. Loisel was a great success. She was prettier than them all, lovely, gracious, smiling, and wild with delight. All the men looked at her, inquired her name, tried to be introduced; all the officials of the Ministry wanted a waltz—even the minister himself noticed her. She danced with abandon, with ecstasy, intoxicated with joy, forgetting everything in the triumph of her beauty, in the radiance of her success, in a kind of mirage of bliss made up of all this worship, this adulation, of all these stirring impulses, and

of that realization of perfect surrender, so sweet to the soul of woman.

She left about four in the morning.

Since midnight her husband had been sleeping in a little deserted anteroom with three other men whose wives were enjoying themselves. He threw over her shoulders the wraps he had brought, ordinary, everyday garments, contrasting sorrily with her elegant ball dress. She felt this, and wanted to get away so as not to be seen by the other women, who were putting on costly furs.

Loisel detained her: "Wait a little; you will catch cold outside; I will go and call a cab."

But she would not listen to him, and hurried downstairs. When they reached the street they could not find a carriage, and they began to look for one, shouting to the cabmen who were passing by. They went down toward the river in desperation, shivering with cold. At last they found on the quays one of those antiquated, all-night broughams, which, in Paris, wait till after dark before venturing to display their dilapidation. It took them to their door in the Rue des Martyrs, and once more, wearily, they climbed the stairs.

Now all was over for her; as for him, he remembered that he must be at his office at ten o'clock. She threw off her cloak before the glass, that she might behold herself once more in all

her magnificence. Suddenly she uttered a cry of dismay—the necklace was gone!

Her husband, already half-undressed, called out, "Anything wrong?"

She turned wildly toward him: "I have—I have—I've lost Mme. Forestier's necklace!"

He stood aghast: "Where? When? You haven't!"

They looked in the folds of her dress, in the folds of her cloak, in her pocket, everywhere. They could not find it.

"Are you sure," he said, "that you had it on when you left the ball?"

"Yes; I felt it in the corridor of the palace."

"But if you had lost it in the street, we should have heard it fall. It must be in the cab."

"No doubt. Did you take his number?"

"No. And didn't you notice it either?"

"No."

They looked at each other, terror-stricken. At last Loisel put on his clothes.

"I shall go back on foot," he said, "over the whole route we came by, to see if I can't find it."

He went out, and she sat waiting in her ball dress, too dazed to go to bed, cold, crushed, lifeless, unable to think. Her husband came back at seven o'clock. He had found nothing. He went to Police Headquarters, to the newspaper office—where he advertised a reward. He went to the

cab companies—to every place, in fact, that seemed at all hopeful.

She waited all day in the same awful state of mind at this terrible misfortune.

Loisel returned at night with a wan, white face. He had found nothing.

"Write immediately to your friend," said he, "that you have broken the clasp of her necklace, and that you have taken it to be mended. That will give us time to turn about."

She wrote as he told her.

By the end of the week they had given up all hope. Loisel, who looked five years older, said, "We must plan how we can replace the necklace."

The next day they took the black satin box to the jeweler whose name was found inside. He referred to his books.

"You did not buy that necklace of me, Madame. I can only have supplied the case."

They went from jeweler to jeweler, hunting for a necklace like the lost one, trying to remember its appearance, heartsick with shame and misery. Finally, in a shop at the Palais Royal, they found a string of diamonds which looked to them just like the other. The price was forty thousand francs, but they could have it for thirty-six thousand. They begged the jeweller to keep it three days for them, and made an agree-

ment with him that he should buy it back for thirty-four thousand francs if they found the lost necklace before the last of February.

Loisel had inherited eighteen thousand francs from his father. He could borrow the remainder. And he did borrow right and left, asking a thousand francs of one, five hundred of another, five louis here, three louis there. He gave notes, assumed heavy obligations, trafficked with money lenders at usurious rates, and, putting the rest of his life in pawn, pledged his signature over and over again. Not knowing how he was to make it all good, and terrified by the penalty yet to come, by the dark destruction which hung over him, by the certainty of incalculable deprivations of body and tortures of soul, he went to get the new bauble, throwing down upon the jeweller's counter the thirty-six thousand francs.

When Mme. Loisel returned the necklace, Mme. Forestier said to her coldly: "Why did you not bring it back sooner? I might have wanted it."

She did not open the case—to the great relief of her friend.

Supposing she had! Would she have discovered the substitution, and what would she have said? Would she not have accused Mme. Loisel of theft?

Mme. Loisel now knew what it was to be in

want, but she showed sudden and remarkable courage. That awful debt must be paid, and she would pay it.

They sent away their servant and moved up into a garret under the roof. She began to find out what heavy housework and the fatiguing drudgery of the kitchen meant. She washed the dishes, scraping the greasy pots and pans with her rosy nails. She washed the dirty linen, the shirts and dish-towels, which dried upon the line. She lugged slops and refuse down to the street every morning, bringing back fresh water, stopping on every landing panting for breath. With her basket on her arm, and dressed like a woman of the people, she haggled with the fruiterer, the grocer, and the butcher, often insulted, but getting every sou's worth that belonged to her.

Each month notes had to be met, others renewed, extensions of time procured. Her husband worked in the evenings, straightening out tradesmen's accounts; he sat up late at night, copying manuscripts at five sous a page.

And this they did for ten years.

At the end of that time they had paid up everything, everything—with all the principal and the accumulated compound interest.

Mme. Loisel looked old now. She had become a domestic drudge, sinewy, rough-skinned, coarse. With towsled hair, tucked-up skirts, and red hands, she would talk loudly while mopping the

floor with great splashes of water. But sometimes, when alone, she sat near the window, and she thought of that gay evening long ago, of the ball where she had been so beautiful, so much admired. Supposing she had not lost the necklace—what then? Who knows? Who knows? Life is so strange and shifting. How easy it is to be ruined or saved!

But one Sunday, going for a walk in the Champs Élysées to refresh herself after her hard week's work, she accidentally came upon a familiar-looking woman with a child. It was Mme. Forestier, still young, still lovely, still charming.

Mme. Loisel became agitated. Should she speak to her? Of course. Now that she had paid, she would tell her all about it. Why not? She went up to her.

"How do you do, Jeanne?"

The other, astonished at the easy manner toward her assumed by a plain housewife whom she did not recognize, said:

"But, Madame, you have made a mistake; I do not know you."

"Why, I am Mathilde Loisel!"

Her friend gave a start.

"Oh, my poor Mathilde," she cried, "how you have changed!"

"Yes; I have seen hard days since last I saw

you; hard enough—and all because of you."

"Of me? And why?"

"You remember the diamond necklace you loaned me to wear at the Ministry ball?"

"Yes, I do. What of it?"

"Well, I lost it!"

"But you brought it back—explain yourself."

"I bought one just like it, and it took us ten years to pay for it. It was not easy for us who had nothing, but it is all over now, and I am glad."

Mme. Forestier stared.

"And you bought a necklace of diamonds to replace mine?"

"Yes; and you never knew the difference, they were so alike." And she smiled with joyful pride at the success of it all.

Mme. Forestier, deeply moved, took both her hands.

"Oh, my poor Mathilde! My necklace was paste. It was worth only about five hundred francs!"

GUY DE MAUPASSANT.

THE YOUNG FOREIGNER

IN Southern Germany lies the little town of Grünwiesel. It is a village like all others of its size—in the centre of a small marketplace with a fountain; at one side of the old Gothic town hall; round about the square the houses of the justice of the peace and the most influential merchants; and in a few narrow streets the dwellings of the other citizens. Everyone knows everyone else; everyone knows what is going on; and if the parson or the mayor or the doctor has a specially fine dish served at lunch the whole town hears of it by dinner time. The same afternoon the women will call on each other and discuss the great event over their cookies and strong coffee. And their conclusion is that the parson must have gone in for a lottery and won like any heathen; that the mayor's bread is well buttered; or that the doctor has received a couple of gold pieces from the druggist for writing some good expensive prescriptions.

So you can imagine how disgrunted was such a gossipy little town when an old gentleman appeared of whom no one knew whence he came,

what he was there for, or how he made his living. The mayor had seen his passport, and declared at coffee at the doctor's house that though the paper was correctly viséd from Berlin to Grünwiesel, yet there must be something fishy, for the man appeared so taciturn. The mayor was the most important person in the town; small wonder that from then on the Stranger was regarded as a bit queer. Moreover, his way of life was not likely to rid the citizens of this impression. He rented a large house that had long stood empty, put into it a whole van-load of queer, unusual furniture, such as stoves, mantelpieces, chemical apparatus, and the like, and lived there quite alone. He did his own cooking, and no human soul was allowed in the house, except an old man from the village who brought him his purchases of bread, meat, and vegetables. Even he was only allowed into the hall where the Stranger himself took charge of the parcels.

I was a boy of ten when the Stranger arrived, and I can still remember as though it were yesterday the gossip he caused in the village. He never came up to the bowling alley in the afternoon, like all the other men; nor did he drop into the tavern of an evening to talk over the news and smoke a pipe. In vain the mayor, the justice of the peace, the doctor, and the priest asked him in for meals or coffee: always he had some excuse. Some said he was crazy; others put him down as

a Jew; a third party would maintain flatly that he was a magician or a sorcerer. I grew to eighteen years of age, and then twenty, and still he was known only as "The Stranger."

But one day it happened that a travelling menagerie came to town. It was one of those wandering troupes that are common in the country—a trained camel, a dancing bear, a few dogs and monkeys which look very comical in men's clothes and do a few pathetic capers. They generally pass through the town, halting at the street corners and open spaces where they play a little discordant music with a drum and fife, make their animals perform, and then collect money from house to house. This particular troupe, however, was distinguished by a gigantic orang-utang of almost human size which walked on its hind legs and was able to perform all sorts of skilful tricks. The little company happened to come to a halt before the Stranger's house. When the drum and fife sounded he was seen looking angrily from behind his dingy overgrown windows. But presently he became more friendly. To everyone's amazement he put his head out of the window and laughed heartily at the grimaces of the orang-utang. He even threw down a silver coin so large that the whole town spoke of it.

The following morning the little circus moved on. The camel carried panniers in which the dogs

and monkeys travelled at their ease, while the men and big ape marched behind. But they were hardly gone more than a couple of hours when the Stranger sent to the livery stable and demanded, to the amazement of the proprietor, a carriage and extra horses, and drove out at the same gate and down the same road that the circus had taken. The whole town was agog to know whither he had gone.

It was already dark when the Stranger returned to the town gate. There sat with him in the carriage another person who had his hat pulled far down over his face and a silk scarf muffled round his mouth and ears. The gatekeeper deemed it his duty to address the newcomer and ask for his passport; but he answered very gruffly, muttering in some foreign tongue.

"It's my nephew," said the Stranger, in a friendly way, pressing a few silver coins into the gatekeeper's hand. "He understands hardly any German. He is only cursing a little in his own language because we have been delayed here."

"Oh, if he's your worship's nephew," answered the gatekeeper, "of course he can come in without a passport. I suppose he's going to live with you?"

"Surely," said the Stranger. "He expects to be here for a long visit."

The gatekeeper made no further objection and the Stranger and his nephew drove into the vil-

lage. But the mayor and burghers were by no means pleased with the gatekeeper. He might at least have noticed a few words of the nephew's speech; from that it would have been easy to tell of what nationality he and his uncle were. The gatekeeper, however, declared that it was neither French nor Italian, but sounded rather more like English, for indeed, if he was not mistaken, the young gentleman had said, "Goddam." In this way the gatekeeper helped himself out of a difficulty and the new arrival to a name, for henceforth he was known in the village as "the young Englishman."

But nobody saw more of the young Englishman than they had of his uncle. He did not appear at the bowling alley or in the tavern; but in other ways he gave folks plenty to talk about. For it often happened that in the house of the Stranger, which had formerly been so silent, such a horrible shouting and uproar would be heard that the citizens would crowd the street in horror. They would see the young Englishman, dressed in a red coat and green trousers, with dishevelled hair and face of terror, running unbelievably swiftly past the windows, this way and that, through all the rooms. The old foreigner would pursue him in a red dressing gown with a hunting whip in his hand. Often he would miss him, but sometimes it would seem to the throng on the street that he must have caught

him, for they would hear piteous cries of pain and resounding cracks of the lash. The women of the village had so lively a sympathy for this horrible treatment of the young foreigner that they finally begged the mayor to take steps. He wrote the Stranger a letter in which he reproached him in strong terms for this rough treatment of his nephew; and threatened, if such scenes continued, to take the young man under his own special protection.

But who was more astonished than the mayor when he saw the Stranger himself calling upon him, for the first time in ten years. The old gentleman explained his actions as being the particular orders of the young man's parents who had instructed him to bring up the youth. He was otherwise a clever and industrious fellow (so the uncle declared), but he found languages exceedingly difficult. The old gentleman was keenly anxious that his nephew should learn German speedily in order that he might have the pleasure of introducing him to the society of Grünwiesel, and he learned so slowly that often one could do nothing better than give him a thorough thrashing. The mayor was completely satisfied by these confidences. He advised the old gentleman to act with moderation; and used to say of an evening in the tavern that he had rarely met so cultivated and pleasant a man as the

foreigner. "The only pity is," he used to add, "that he goes out so little; but I think that as soon as his nephew can talk a little German he will visit our circle more often."

By this one incident the opinion of the town was totally altered. People now spoke of the Stranger as a charming man, longed for a closer acquaintance, and found it quite natural if now and then a hideous uproar arose in the empty house. "He is giving his nephew German lessons," Grünwiesel folk would say, and no longer halted to stare.

After three months or so the instruction in German seemed to have ended, for the old gentleman now went a step farther. There lived in the town an old broken-down Frenchman who used to give the young people dancing lessons. The Stranger asked him to call and said that he would be glad to have his nephew instructed in the latest waltzes. He gave him to understand that the pupil was quick to learn but, as far as dancing was concerned, somewhat self-willed; for the youth had learned dancing previously from another master, but in so outlandish a way, that he could not allow him to appear in society. The nephew, however, rather fancied himself in the ballroom although his steps had not the faintest resemblance to a waltz or a two-step—not even to the Schottisch or the new French dances.

But the old gentleman promised a dollar an hour for the lesson, and the dancing master was ready enough to begin.

The old Frenchman used to vow that there was never anything in the world so extraordinary as these dancing lessons. The nephew, who was quite a tall, slender young man with rather short legs, with his hair beautifully barbered, would appear in a red frock coat, wide green trousers, and kid gloves. He spoke only a little and with a strong foreign accent; was at first obedient and attentive; but soon he would fall into the most wayward behaviour. He would dance amazing figures in which he cut capers so extraordinary that sight and hearing almost failed his tutor; and if the latter attempted to correct him he would snatch off his pumps, hurl them at the Frenchman's head and then caper about the room on all fours. At the sound of this uproar the old gentleman would rush in suddenly in his flowing red dressing gown with a cap of gold paper on his head. He would let his hunting whip fall, by no means gently, on his nephew's back. The latter would then begin to howl most horribly and spring upon tables and high chests of drawers—even out on to the window sills—speaking a strange foreign tongue. But the old gentleman in his red dressing gown would be not a whit perturbed. Seizing his nephew by the leg he would drag him down, thrash him thoroughly,

and fasten his cravat more tightly. This always had the effect of making him again docile and well behaved, and the lesson would continue without further disturbance.

But when the dancing master had brought his pupil far enough along to have music at the lessons, then the nephew was a different creature. One of the town musicians was engaged, and used to sit on a table in the hall. The teacher took the part of the lady, for which purpose the old gentleman provided a silk gown and an East Indian shawl, and insisted that he wear them. The nephew would ask for the honour, and begin to two-step or waltz with his partner. But he was a frenzied and tireless dancer: never would he let the teacher out of his long arms. The latter might groan and cry, but he had to dance until he sank exhausted or until the arm of the fiddler was lame at the bow. These hours of instruction almost brought the dancing master under the sod; but the dollar (which was given him promptly at each visit) and the good wine which the old gentleman served, always pervailed upon him to return, although the day before he might have vowed never to enter the house again.

But the people of Grünwiesel viewed the subject quite differently from the old Frenchman. They declared that the nephew evidently had many social talents, and the women of the village were specially delighted that when men were

so scarce they would gain so spirited a partner for the winter cotillions.

One morning maids returning from market brought their mistresses wonderful news. Before the Stranger's house they had seen a shining carriage waiting, with a fine pair of horses in harness, and a footman in rich livery at the step. Then the door of the dreary old house had opened and two elegantly clad gentlemen came out—first, the old foreigner, and then none other than the young Englishman, who had learned German with such difficulty and who was said to be such an entrancing dancer. Both entered the carriage, the footman jumped on the box, and the equipage had driven straight to the house of the mayor.

When the ladies heard this as told by their maids, they hastened to tear off their cooking aprons and boudoir caps and dressed themselves in state. "There is nothing more certain," they said to their families as they scurried about cleaning up their drawing rooms, "there is nothing more certain than that the Stranger is now introducing his nephew to the world. For ten years the old fool hasn't cared to set foot in our house, but it must be pardoned him on account of his nephew, who is said to be very attractive." Thus they spoke, and warned their sons and daughters to be on their best behaviour when the strangers came: to stand up straight and to use choicer

language than usual. And the wise women of the village were not wrong; for the old gentleman now went the rounds with his nephew, introducing himself and the young man to the amenities of Grünwiesel society.

Everywhere people were delighted with the pair and regretted not to have formed this congenial acquaintanceship earlier. The old gentleman appeared to be a worthy and very well-informed man. To be sure he said everything with a little smile, so that one was never certain whether he was quite in earnest; but he spoke of the weather, the neighbourhood, the summer pastimes at the inn on the mountain, all with such charm that everyone was enchanted. But the nephew! He fascinated everybody, he won all hearts. Truly, as far as his exterior was concerned, no one could call him good-looking; his jaw was far too prominent, and his complexion was very swarthy; also he had a habit of making rather strange grimaces, would twitch his eyes and grate his teeth; but, none the less, people found the cut of his features uncommonly interesting. And no one could be more lithe and active. To be sure, his clothes hung upon him somewhat oddly, but everything became him handsomely; he would move about the room with great animation, throw himself here upon a sofa, there into an armchair, and stretched out his legs in front of him; what would have been esteemed

clumsy and boorish in another young man was put down as geniality in the nephew. "He is an Englishman," they said; "they're all like that: an Englishman will lie down on the couch and snore while ten ladies are without seats and have to stand. One must not take that amiss in an Englishman!"

Toward his uncle the young man was very docile: when he began to ramble about the room or (one of his favourite tricks) draw up his feet on his chair, a severe glance always brought him to order. And how could one be offended when the uncle would always say privately to the hostess, "My nephew is still a little raw and uncultured, but I expect wonders from this society which will mould him in the right direction. I beg you to be lenient with him."

In this way the nephew was introduced to society, and on this and following days Grünwiesel talked of hardly anything else. But the old gentleman did not stop with this: he seemed to have changed his whole mode of living and thinking. Of an afternoon he would now repair with his nephew to the casino on the mountainside where the leading men of Grünwiesel used to take a glass of beer and play tenpins. The young Englishman showed himself a skilful hand at the game, for he rarely rolled less than 150 or 160. But sometimes an eccentric humour seized him: he might grab the ball and rush at

top speed out of the door and down underneath the alley, where he would raise the maddest uproar; or if he had rolled a strike or a spare he would be just as likely as not to stand on his hands and wave his legs in air; if a wagon chanced to be passing, in a twinkling he would leap on the driver's seat and make faces at the spectators. Then, after riding a little way, he would come plunging back in high glee.

When these scenes occurred the old gentleman used to be heartily ashamed and begged the mayor and the others to pardon his nephew's lack of breeding; but they would always laugh and say it was only his high spirits. They had been just the same, at his age, they said; and they seemed to hold the young jackanapes in high esteem.

But there were also times when they were not a little annoyed with him, and yet dared not to say anything, for the young Englishman was universally accepted as an encyclopedia of knowledge and culture. The old gentleman used of an evening to visit "The Golden Stag" (the favourite inn of the town) and take his nephew with him. In spite of his youth, the latter behaved like any old-timer. He would sit down with his glasses, put on his huge tortoise-shell spectacles, draw out a big pipe, and smoke away with the best of them. And if the articles in the newspapers were discussed and questions of war and peace were argued, very likely the doctor would

hold this view and the mayor that; while the common folk would be amazed at the extent of their political knowledge. But the nephew knew no such thing as reverence; for very likely he would be of quite a different opinion. Then he would pound the table with his fists (from which, by the way, he never took off his gloves), and give mayor and doctor plainly to understand that they knew nothing of the matter. He had heard it quite otherwise and had a clearer view. And then, in his weirdly broken German, he would expound his theory; and, to the intense vexation of the mayor, the crowd would applaud it lustily; for naturally, being an Englishman, would he not be likely to know?

Perhaps the doctor and the mayor, not venturing to show their annoyance in words, would sit down to a game of chess. But the nephew would come up behind them, peer over the mayor's shoulder with his uncouth spectacles, and criticize his moves; or say to the doctor that he should play such and such a piece; until they were both furious. But if the mayor would angrily invite him to a game to take a fall out of him, the old foreigner would come forward and tighten his nephew's collar, whereupon the latter would sit down quite peaceably and very likely checkmate his opponent.

The favourite evening diversion in Grünwiesel had always been a hand of cards for half-

crown stakes; but the nephew asserted that this was pitiful. He would wager crowns and ducats and maintained that he was the finest player of them all; but in this game the others generally got the better of him and he lost huge sums. They had no scruples against winning handsomely from him, for as they used to say, "Is he not an Englishman? They are all disgustingly rich." So they would fill their pockets, with complacency.

Thus, little by little, the Stranger's nephew acquired a tremendous reputation in Grünwiesel and neighbourhood. Not within memory of the oldest inhabitant could any one recall a young man so unusual, and it was surely a quaint situation. No one could say that the nephew knew anything save a little dancing and a few moves at chess. Latin and Greek were to him, as the saying goes, Bohemian villages. If they were playing games at the mayor's house and it fell to his turn to put something on paper, lo and behold, he could not even write his own name! In geography he made the most appalling breaks, for not infrequently he would speak of a German town as being in France or a Danish town in Poland. He had read nothing, studied nothing, and the priest would often shake his head over the young man's extraordinary ignorance. And yet everything that he said or did was held to be excellent, for he was brazen enough always to insist that he

was right, and the end of all his remarks was, "I know better."

Winter came, and then the nephew entered upon his greatest glory. Every gathering was tedious if he was not there; everyone yawned when one of the worthies said something; but did the nephew make the silliest remark in the worst possible German, the room was all ears. It now appeared that the excellent youth was a poet, too, and hardly an evening went by when he would not draw a paper from his pocket and read one or two sonnets aloud. To be sure there were a few who said that some of the verses were wretched and without sense and that they had read the rest elsewhere, but the nephew was undismayed. He read and read, would comment on the felicities of his verses, and always drew rousing applause.

But dancing was his particular triumph. No one could pirouette with such speed and spirit, no one could execute such daring and unusual figures. For the ballroom his uncle always had him dressed in the very latest mode, and although the garments sat but ill on his body, yet everyone found his appearance most distinguished. To be sure, the men were somewhat annoyed at the new etiquette which he introduced. Formerly the mayor had always opened the ball in his own person, and the leaders of the younger set ar-

ranged the other dances to their own taste; but as soon as the young foreigner appeared everything was changed. Without many words he would take the most pleasing lady by the hand, place himself with her at the top of the room, do exactly as he liked, and was self-appointed master of ceremonies. He embraced his partners a good deal more freely than country custom allowed, but since the ladies found his manners delightful, the men dared not protest, and the nephew remained king of the ballroom.

The old gentleman seemed to take the keenest pleasure in these occasions. He never took his eyes off his nephew, smiled continually to himself, and when people came up to congratulate him upon his talented kinsman his content knew no bounds. He would break out into the merriest laughter and betray extravagant satisfaction. Grünwiesel folk ascribed these unusual signs of complacence to his great affection for his nephew and thought them quite natural. Now and then, however, he had to exercise his authority over the young man, for in the midst of the most graceful dances the youth would sometimes leap upon the musicians' platform, snatch the double bass from the player's hand, and fiddle upon it most horribly; or suddenly turn a somersault and dance upon his hands, stretching his legs into the air. On these occasions his uncle would take

him apart, speak to him severely, and draw his collar tighter; whereupon he would always resume his gentlemanly mien.

In this way did the nephew conduct himself in company and in the ballroom. But, as is always the case, evil manners corrupt good, and a new and striking fashion, however absurd, has a great attraction for young people who are not yet settled in deportment. And so it transpired in Grünwiesel by reason of the nephew and his extraordinary ways. When the young men saw that his boorish laughter and chatter, his rude repartee toward older people, were more praised than blamed, and that such behaviour was considered very spirited, not unnaturally they thought, "It would be easy for me to play the monkey, too." They had been industrious and well-behaved, but now they thought, "What advantage is good behaviour if one gets on better with unconventionality?" And they abandoned their books and spent their time on the streets. Formerly they had been mannerly and courteous to everyone, kept silence until spoken to, and were modest in their answers; but now they deemed themselves on a level with their elders, argued with them, gave their opinion on every topic, and even laughed in the mayor's face when he made a statement. To everything they said, "We know better."

In former days the young men of Grünwiesel had avoided rough and common ways. Now they

sang ribald songs, smoked tobacco, and formed drinking clubs; although their eyesight was perfect they bought large tortoise-shell spectacles, put them on their noses, and thought themselves made men, for they looked like the far-famed nephew. At home, or when calling, they would lounge, booted and spurred, on the sofa, balance their chairs on two legs and put their cheeks in both hands and their elbows on the table, which became the height of fashion. In vain would their parents and friends tell them how silly and ungraceful all this was; they quoted the glittering example of the nephew. In vain it was represented to them that since the nephew was English a certain crudeness must be pardoned as a national trait; young Grünwiesel asserted its right to behave as badly as any Englishman. In short, it was lamentable to see how the evil example of the nephew undermined good manners and gentle breeding in the little town.

But the pleasure of the younger generation in their rough behaviour did not last long, for the following incident quickly altered the whole situation. A grand concert was to bring the winter season to an end. The performers were to be partly members of the town band and partly skilled amateurs. The mayor played the 'cello; the doctor was an artist on the flageolet; the druggist, although he had no proper training, blew the flute; several young ladies had studied

choral singing, and so everything was easily arranged. Then the old Stranger suggested that the only thing needed to make the affair a complete success was a duet, which was an essential feature of every good concert. The committee were rather taken aback at this suggestion. The mayor's daughter had a voice like a nightingale, but where to find a gentleman who could sing with her? They were about to settle on the old organist, who had once had an excellent bass, but the Stranger asserted that this would not be necessary, for his nephew had been carefully trained as a singer. They were not a little surprised to learn of this new accomplishment of the nephew, and he was asked to sing something as a test. With the exception of one or two very strange mannerisms, which were thought to be English, he sang like an angel. So the duet was added to the program, and at length the evening came when Grünwiesel ears were to be delighted by the long heralded musicale.

Unfortunately, the old Stranger was unable to witness his nephew's triumph, as he was ill; but to the mayor, who called on him an hour or so before the performance, he gave a few rules for the regulation of his protégé. "My nephew is a good fellow," he said. "But now and then he gets a fit of wildness and plays the fool. For that reason I am particularly sorry that I can't attend the concert, for he doesn't dare misbehave

before me. I ought in fairness to say that this habit of his is not mere freakishness, but a kind of nervous hysteria for which he is hardly responsible. If he gets into a tantrum, Mr. Mayor, if he jumps on a music stand or tries to play the double bass or something of that sort—just loosen his dress collar, and if that doesn't help, take it off altogether. Then you will find him quite well-behaved again."

The mayor thanked the invalid for his confidence and promised in case of need to do as he had advised.

The concert hall was packed full. All Grünwiesel and neighbourhood were there. Huntsmen, priests, officials, gentry—everyone within three hours' journey came to town and brought his family to enjoy the unusual treat. The town band acquitted itself famously; the mayor played the 'cello, accompanied by the druggist on the flute; then the organist sang a ballad with universal approval, and the doctor's solo on the flageolet was roundly applauded.

This closed the first part of the program, and everyone was now intent upon the second half, in which the young Stranger was to sing with the mayor's daughter. The nephew had appeared in sumptuous attire and had long since drawn the attention of the audience on himself. He had established himself, in perfect coolness, in the comfortable armchair which had been

brought out for a countess from the neighbourhood. He stretched out his legs far in front of him, stared at everyone through powerful opera glasses, which he used in addition to his big spectacles, and fondled a large mastiff which he had led in despite the prohibition against bringing dogs. The countess for whom the armchair was prepared soon appeared, but the nephew had no thought of jumping up and offering her the place. On the contrary, he settled himself all the more comfortably, and no one dared drop him a hint. The distinguished visitor had to sit on a common cane chair with the other ladies and must have been a deal vexed.

During the mayor's playing and the organist's ditty, even while the doctor was improvising on the flageolet and everyone else held breath to listen, the nephew was allowing the dog to play with his handkerchief or talking to his neighbours. Everyone who did not know him was amazed at his extraordinary demeanour.

And so it was small wonder that all were exceedingly curious to see how he would carry off his duet. The second part of the program began; the town musicians played a little overture, and then the mayor and his daughter advanced to the young man. Handing him a sheet of music, the mayor said, "Mushoo, are you ready for the duet?" The young man laughed, clicked his teeth, and jumped up. The other two followed

him to the music stand, and the audience was all expectation. The organist tapped with his baton and nodded to the nephew to begin. The latter gazed at the music through his big spectacles and uttered one or two harsh, mournful sounds. The organist cried out in amazement, "Two notes lower, your excellency! C is your note; you must sing C!"

But instead of singing C the nephew snatched off one of his pumps and hurled it at the organist's head, making the powder fly lustily. When the mayor saw this he thought, "Good Lord! He's got one of his fits again!" Springing behind him, he seized his neck and loosened his collar. But the young man only became wilder. He ceased speaking German, babbled an unknown tongue which no one could understand, and jumped up and down in excitement. The mayor was in agonized perplexity. What to do? A particularly severe attack of hysterics must have befallen the unfortunate youth, he thought; and remembered the uncle's advice to remove the collar entirely.

But no sooner was this done than he stood transfixed with amazement; for instead of human skin and colouring, the young man's neck was covered with a dark brown fur; and immediately his antics became wilder. His kid gloves went to his hair and with one tug it was gone. Oh, horror! The beautifully barbered locks were

only a wig, which he threw in the mayor's face, and the nephew's head appeared overgrown with the same brown fur.

He upset tables and benches, threw down the music stand, leaped upon fiddles and clarinets and acted like a madman. "Catch him! Catch him!" cried the mayor, quite beside himself. "He is out of his head, catch him!" But that was not so easy, for the nephew had ripped off his gloves and showed nails on his hands with which he scratched most viciously.

But at last a stalwart huntsman seized him and pinioned his arms, although he still kicked madly with his feet and laughed and screamed in a hoarse voice. People gathered round to gaze at the amazing young man—but alas, he no longer seemed like a human being at all. A learned gentleman from the neighbourhood, known as a famous naturalist and possessor of a great collection of stuffed animals, came up, looked closely, and cried in amazement, "Good God, ladies and gentleman, what on earth is this beast doing here? That is an ape, *homo troglodytes Linnæi!* I'll give you six dollars for him and add him to my collection!"

Who could describe the amazement of Grünwiesel folk when they heard this? "What, an ape, an orang-utang, in our society? The young Englishman just an ordinary ape?" So they cried and gazed at one another in dismay. No one

would believe it, no one would trust his ears. The men examined the animal more closely; but it was and remained an ape, and nothing else.

"But how can this be?" cried the mayor's wife. "Hasn't he often and often read me his poems? And taken lunch at my house like any other man?"

"What!" retorted the doctor's wife. "Hasn't he taken coffee with us, talked learnedly, and smoked with my husband?"

"Is it possible?" exclaimed the men. "Didn't he play tenpins at the casino and argue with us about the war?"

"What!" they all echoed. "Didn't he dance at all our balls? An ape! An ape! It is sorcery, black magic!"

"Indeed it *is* sorcery and devil's work!" cried the priest, in a rage. "It is a hellish bit of deception and must be severely punished."

The mayor was of the same opinion, and they set off immediately to arrest the old Stranger, who was evidently a sorcerer; and six soldiers carried the ape.

Accompanied by a great crowd they came to the desolate old house. They knocked at the door and rang the bell, but in vain, for no one appeared. Then the mayor in a rage ordered the door broken in, and they entered the Stranger's apartments. But there was nothing to see except old furniture. The foreigner himself was no-

where; but on his desk lay a large sealed envelope addressed to the mayor. He opened it and read:

My dear Friends in Grünwiesel:

By the time you read this I shall no longer be enjoying your delightful hospitality, and you will at length have discovered the status and nationality of my nephew. I have permitted myself this jest at your expense; take it as a lesson not to compel a stranger who wishes to live by himself to join in your society. I could not be bothered with your everlasting gossip, your provincial manners, and your absurd trivialities. Therefore I took pains to educate the young orang-utang whom you have found so congenial a substitute. Farewell; and take the lesson to heart!

Naturally, Grünwiesel was the laughing stock of the country. Their only consolation was that the affair had been conducted by witchcraft. But most of all, the young folk were abashed for having imitated the evil manners of the ape. Henceforward, they leaned on their elbows no longer, did not joggle their chairs, kept silence until they were asked to speak, put away their unnecessary spectacles, and became courteous and well-mannered as before. And, if ever one of them fell into bad habits, Grünwiesel folk used to say to him, "He is an ape." When he heard this he was not slow in mending his ways.

As for the ape, who had played the rôle of

young Englishman so long, he was delivered over to the learned collector, who gave him the freedom of his courtyard, fed him well, and used to show him off as a curiosity. Very likely you can see him there to this day.

WILHELM HAUFF.

(*Translation by Christopher Morley.*)

THE HAPPY PRINCE

HIGH above the city, on a tall column, stood the statue of the Happy Prince. He was gilded all over with thin leaves of fine gold, for eyes he had two bright sapphires, and a large red ruby glowed on his sword-hilt.

He was very much admired indeed. "He is as beautiful as a weathercock," remarked one of the Town Councillors who wished to gain a reputation for having artistic tastes; "only not quite so useful," he added, fearing lest people should think him unpractical, which he really was not.

"Why can't you be like the Happy Prince?" asked a sensible mother of her little boy who was crying for the moon. "The Happy Prince never dreams of crying for anything."

"I am glad there is someone in the world who is quite happy," muttered a disappointed man as he gazed at the wonderful statue.

"He looks just like an angel," said the Charity Children as they came out of the cathedral in their bright scarlet cloaks and their clean white pinafores.

"How do you know?" said the Mathematical Master, "you have never seen one."

"Ah! but we have, in our dreams," answered the children; and the Mathematical Master frowned and looked very severe, for he did not approve of children dreaming.

One night there flew over the city a little Swallow. His friends had gone away to Egypt six weeks before, but he had stayed behind, for he was in love with the most beautiful Reed. He had met her early in the spring as he was flying down the river after a big yellow moth, and had been so attracted by her slender waist that he had stopped to talk to her.

"Shall I love you?" said the Swallow, who liked to come to the point at once, and the Reed made him a low bow. So he flew round and round her, touching the water with his wings, and making silver ripples. This was his courtship, and it lasted all through the summer.

"It is a ridiculous attachment," twittered the other Swallows; "she has no money, and far too many relations"; and indeed the river was quite full of Reeds. Then, when the autumn came, they all flew away.

After they had gone he felt lonely, and began to tire of his lady-love. "She has no conversation," he said, "and I am afraid that she is a coquette, for she is always flirting with the wind." And certainly, whenever the wind blew, the Reed made the most graceful curtseys. "I admit that she is domestic," he continued, "but I love travel-

ling, and my wife, consequently, should love travelling also."

"Will you come away with me?" he said finally to her; but the Reed shook her head, she was so attached to her home.

"You have been trifling with me," he cried. "I am off to the Pyramids. Good-bye!" and he flew away.

All day long he flew, and at night-time he arrived at the city. "Where shall I put up?" he said; "I hope the town has made preparations."

Then he saw the statue on the tall column.

"I will put up there," he cried; "it's a fine position with plenty of fresh air." So he alighted just between the feet of the Happy Prince.

"I have a golden bedroom," he said softly to himself as he looked round, and he prepared to go to sleep; but just as he was putting his head under his wing a large drop of water fell on him. "What a curious thing!" he cried; "there is not a single cloud in the sky, the stars are quite clear and bright, and yet it is raining. The climate in the north of Europe is really dreadful. The Reed used to like the rain, but that was merely her selfishness."

Then another drop fell.

"What is the use of a statue if it cannot keep the rain off?" he said; "I must look for a good chimney-pot," and he determined to fly away.

But before he had opened his wings, a third

drop fell, and he looked up, and saw—Ah! what did he see?

The eyes of the Happy Prince were filled with tears, and tears were running down his golden cheeks. His face was so beautiful in the moonlight that the little Swallow was filled with pity.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"I am the Happy Prince."

"Why are you weeping then?" asked the Swallow; "you have quite drenched me."

"When I was alive and had a human heart," answered the statue, "I did not know what tears were, for I lived in the Palace of Sans-Souci, where sorrow is not allowed to enter. In the daytime I played with my companions in the garden, and in the evening I led the dance in the Great Hall. Round the garden ran a very lofty wall, but I never cared to ask what lay beyond it, everything about me was so beautiful. My courtiers called me the Happy Prince, and happy indeed I was, if pleasure be happiness. So I lived, and so I died. And now that I am dead they have set me up here so high that I can see all the ugliness and all the misery of my city, and though my heart is made of lead yet I cannot choose but weep."

"What! is he not solid gold?" said the Swallow to himself. He was too polite to make any personal remarks out loud.

"Far away," continued the statue in a low

musical voice, "far away in a little street there is a poor house. One of the windows is open, and through it I can see a woman seated at a table. Her face is thin and worn, and she has coarse, red hands, all pricked by the needle, for she is a seamstress. She is embroidering passion-flowers on a satin gown for the loveliest of the Queen's maids-of-honour to wear at the next Court-ball. In a bed in the corner of the room her little boy is lying ill. He has a fever, and is asking for oranges. His mother has nothing to give him but river water, so he is crying. Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow, will you not bring her the ruby out of my sword-hilt? My feet are fastened to this pedestal and I cannot move."

"I am waited for in Egypt," said the Swallow. "My friends are flying up and down the Nile, and talking to the large lotus-flowers. Soon they will go to sleep in the tomb of the great King. The King is there himself in his painted coffin. He is wrapped in yellow linen, and embalmed with spices. Round his neck is a chain of pale green jade, and his hands are like withered leaves."

"Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow," said the Prince, "will you not stay with me for one night, and be my messenger? The boy is so thirsty, and the mother so sad."

"I don't think I like boys," answered the Swallow. "Last summer, when I was staying on

the river, there were two rude boys, the miller's sons, who were always throwing stones at me. They never hit me, of course; we swallows fly far too well for that, and besides, I come of a family famous for its agility; but still, it was a mark of disrespect."

But the Happy Prince looked so sad that the little Swallow was sorry. "It is very cold here," he said; "but I will stay with you for one night, and be your messenger."

"Thank you, little Swallow," said the Prince.

So the Swallow picked out the great ruby from the Prince's sword, and flew away with it in his beak over the roofs of the town.

He passed by the cathedral tower, where the white marble angels were sculptured. He passed by the palace and heard the sound of dancing. A beautiful girl came out on the balcony with her lover. "How wonderful the stars are," he said to her, "and how wonderful is the power of love!"

"I hope my dress will be ready in time for the State-ball," she answered; "I have ordered passion-flowers to be embroidered on it; but the seamstresses are so lazy."

He passed over the river, and saw the lanterns hanging to the masts of the ships. He passed over the Ghetto, and saw the old Jews bargaining with each other, and weighing out money in copper scales. At last he came to the poor house

and looked in. The boy was tossing feverishly on his bed, and the mother had fallen asleep, she was so tired. In he hopped, and laid the great ruby on the table beside the woman's thimble. Then he flew gently round the bed, fanning the boy's forehead with his wings. "How cool I feel," said the boy, "I must be getting better"; and he sank into a delicious slumber.

Then the Swallow flew back to the Happy Prince, and told him what he had done. "It is curious," he remarked, "but I feel quite warm now, although it is so cold."

"That is because you have done a good action," said the Prince. And the little Swallow began to think, and then he fell asleep. Thinking always made him sleepy.

When day broke he flew down to the river and had a bath. "What a remarkable phenomenon," said the Professor of Ornithology as he was passing over the bridge. "A swallow in winter!" And he wrote a long letter about it to the local newspaper. Every one quoted it, it was full of so many words that they could not understand.

"To-night I go to Egypt," said the Swallow, and he was in high spirits at the prospect. He visited all the public monuments, and sat a long time on top of the church steeple. Wherever he went the Sparrows chirruped, and said to each other: "What, a distinguished stranger!" so he enjoyed himself very much.

When the moon rose he flew back to the Happy Prince. "Have you any commissions for Egypt?" he cried; "I am just starting."

"Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow," said the Prince, "will you not stay with me one night longer?"

"I am waited for in Egypt," answered the Swallow. "To-morrow my friends will fly up to the Second Cataract. The river-horse couches there among the bulrushes, and on a great granite throne sits the God Memnon. All night long he watches the stars, and when the morning star shines he utters one cry of joy, and then he is silent. At noon the yellow lions come down to the water's edge to drink. They have eyes like green beryls, and their roar is louder than the roar of the cataract."

"Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow," said the Prince, "far across the city I see a young man in a garret. He is leaning over a desk covered with papers, and in a tumbler by his side there is a bunch of withered violets. His hair is brown and crisp, and his lips are red as a pomegranate, and he has large and dreamy eyes. He is trying to finish a play for the Director of the Theatre, but he is too cold to write any more. There is no fire in the grate, and hunger has made him faint."

"I will wait with you one night longer," said the Swallow, who really had a good heart. "Shall I take him another ruby?"

"Alas! I have no ruby now," said the Prince, "my eyes are all that I have left. They are made of rare sapphires, which were brought out of India a thousand years ago. Pluck out one of them and take it to him. He will sell it to the jeweller, and buy food and firewood, and finish his play."

"Dear Prince," said the Swallow, "I cannot do that"; and he began to weep.

"Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow," said the Prince, "do as I command you."

So the Swallow plucked out the Prince's eye, and flew away to the student's garret. It was easy enough to get in, as there was a hole in the roof. Through this he darted, and came into the room. The young man had his head buried in his hands, so he did not hear the flutter of the bird's wings, and when he looked up he found the beautiful sapphire lying on the withered violets.

"I am beginning to be appreciated," he cried; "this is from some great admirer. Now I can finish my play," and he looked quite happy.

The next day the Swallow flew down to the harbour. He sat on the mast of a large vessel and watched the sailors hauling big chests out of the hold with ropes. "Heave a-hoy!" they shouted as each chest came up. "I am going to Egypt," cried the Swallow, but nobody minded, and when the Moon rose he flew back to the Happy Prince.

"I am come to bid you good-bye," he cried.

"Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow," said the Prince, "will you not stay with me one night longer?"

"It is winter," answered the Swallow, "and the chill snow will soon be here. In Egypt the sun is warm on the green palm-trees, and the crocodiles lie in the mud and look lazily about them. My companions are building a nest in the Temple of Baalbec, and the pink and white doves are watching them, and cooing to each other. Dear Prince, I must leave you, but I will never forget you, and next spring I will bring you back two beautiful jewels in place of those you have given away. The ruby shall be redder than a red rose, and the sapphire shall be as blue as the great sea."

"In the square below," said the Happy Prince, "there stands a little match-girl. She has let her matches fall in the gutter, and they are all spoiled. Her father will beat her if she does not bring home some money, and she is crying. She has no shoes or stockings, and her little head is bare. Pluck out my other eye, and give it to her, and her father will not beat her."

"I will stay with you one night longer," said the Swallow, "but I cannot pluck out your eye. You would be quite blind then."

"Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow," said the Prince, "do as I command you."

So he plucked out the Prince's other eye, and

darted down with it. He swooped past the match girl, and slipped the jewel into the palm of her hand. "What a lovely bit of glass," cried the little girl; and she ran home, laughing.

Then the Swallow came back to the Prince. "You are blind now," he said, "so I will stay with you always."

"No, little Swallow," said the poor Prince, "you must go away to Egypt."

"I will stay with you always," said the Swallow and he slept at the Prince's feet.

All the next day he sat on the Prince's shoulder, and told him stories of what he had seen in strange lands. He told him of the red ibises, who stand in long rows on the banks of the Nile, and catch gold-fish in their beaks; of the Sphinx, who is as old as the world itself, and lives in the desert, and knows everything; of the merchants, who walk slowly by the side of their camels, and carry amber beads in their hand; of the King of the Mountains of the Moon, who is as black as ebony, and worships a large crystal; of the great green snake that sleeps in a palm-tree, and has twenty priests to feed it with honey-cakes; and of the pygmies who sail over a big lake on large flat leaves, and are always at war with the butterflies.

"Dear little Swallow," said the Prince, "you tell me of marvellous things, but more marvellous than anything is the suffering of men and of

women. There is no Mystery so great as Misery. Fly over my city, little Swallow, and tell me what you see there."

So the Swallow flew over the great city, and saw the rich making merry in their beautiful houses, while the beggars were sitting at the gates. He flew into dark lanes, and saw the white faces of starving children looking out listlessly at the black streets. Under the archway of a bridge two little boys were lying in one another's arms to try and keep themselves warm. "How hungry we are!" they said. "You must not lie here," shouted the Watchman, and they wandered out into the rain.

Then he flew back and told the Prince what he had seen.

"I am covered with fine gold," said the Prince, "you must take it off, leaf by leaf, and give it to my poor; the living always think that gold can make them happy."

Leaf after leaf of the fine gold the Swallow picked off, till the Happy Prince looked quite dull and grey. Leaf after leaf of the fine gold he brought to the poor, and the children's faces grew rosier, and they laughed and played games in the street. "We have bread now!" they cried.

Then the snow came, and after the snow came the frost. The streets looked as if they were made of silver, they were so bright and glistening; long icicles like crystal daggers hung down

from the eaves of the houses, everybody went about in furs, and the little boys wore scarlet caps and skated on the ice.

The poor little Swallow grew colder and colder, but he would not leave the Prince, he loved him too well. He picked up crumbs outside the baker's door when the baker was not looking, and tried to keep himself warm by flapping his wings.

But at last he knew that he was going to die. He had just strength to fly up to the Prince's shoulder once more. "Good-bye, dear Prince!" he murmured, "will you let me kiss your hand?"

"I am glad that you are going to Egypt at last, little Swallow," said the Prince, "you have stayed too long here; but you must kiss me on the lips, for I love you."

"It is not to Egypt that I am going," said the Swallow. "I am going to the House of Death. Death is the brother of Sleep, is he not?"

And he kissed the Happy Prince on the lips, and fell down dead at his feet.

At that moment a curious crack sounded inside the statue, as if something had broken. The fact is that the leaden heart had snapped right in two. It certainly was a dreadfully hard frost.

Early the next morning the Mayor was walking in the square below in company with the Town Councillors. As they passed the column

he looked up at the statue: "Dear me! how shabby the Happy Prince looks!" he said.

"How shabby indeed!" cried the Town Councillors, who always agreed with the Mayor; and they went up to look at it.

"The ruby has fallen out of his sword, his eyes are gone, and he is golden no longer," said the Mayor; "in fact, he is little better than a beggar!"

"Little better than a beggar," said the Town Councillors.

"And here is actually a dead bird at his feet!" continued the Mayor. "We must really issue a proclamation that birds are not to be allowed to die here." And the Town Clerk made a note of the suggestion.

So they pulled down the statue of the Happy Prince. "As he is no longer beautiful he is no longer useful," said the Art Professor at the University.

Then they melted the statue in a furnace, and the Mayor held a meeting of the Corporation to decide what was to be done with the metal. "We must have another statue, of course," he said, "and it shall be a statue of myself."

"Of myself," said each of the Town Councillors, and they quarrelled. When I last heard of them they were quarrelling still.

"What a strange thing!" said the overseer of the workmen at the foundry. "This broken lead

heart will not melt in the furnace. We must throw it away." So they threw it on a dust-heap where the dead Swallow was also lying.

"Bring me the two most precious things in the city," said God to one of His Angels; and the Angel brought Him the leaden heart and the dead bird.

"You have rightly chosen," said God, "for in my garden of Paradise this little bird shall sing for evermore, and in my city of gold the Happy Prince shall praise me."

OSCAR WILDE.

PATIENT GRISELDA

IT IS a long time ago, that, amongst the marquises of Saluzzo, the principal or head of the family was a youth, called Gualtieri, who, as he was a bachelor, spent his whole time in hawking and hunting, without any thought of ever being encumbered with a wife and children; in which respect, no doubt, he was very wise. But this being disagreeable to his subjects, they often pressed him to marry, to the end he might neither die without an heir, nor they be left without a lord; offering themselves to provide such a lady for him, and of such a family, that they should have great hopes from her, and he reason enough to be satisfied. "Worthy friends," he replied, "you urge me to do a thing which I was fully resolved against, considering what a difficult matter it is to find a person of a suitable temper, with the great abundance everywhere of such as are otherwise, and how miserable also the man's life must be who is tied to a disagreeable woman. As to your getting at a woman's temper from her family, and so choosing one to please me, that seems quite a ridicu-

lous fancy; for, besides the uncertainty with regard to their true fathers, how many daughters do we see resembling neither father nor mother? Nevertheless, as you are so fond of having me noosed, I will agree to be so. Therefore, that I may have nobody to blame but myself, should it happen amiss, I will make my own choice; and I protest, let me marry whom I will, that, unless you show her the respect that is due to her as my lady, you shall know, to your cost, how grievous it is to me to have taken a wife at your request, contrary to my own inclination." The honest men replied that they were well satisfied, provided he would but make the trial. Now he had taken a fancy, some time before, to the behaviour of a poor country girl, who lived in a village not far from his palace; and thinking that he might live comfortably enough with her, he determined, without seeking any farther to marry her. Accordingly he sent for her father, who was a very poor man, and acquainted him with it. Afterwards he summoned all his subjects together and said to them, "Gentlemen, it was and is your desire that I take a wife: I do it rather to please you, than out of any liking I have to matrimony. You know that you promised me to be satisfied, and to pay her due honour, whoever she is that I shall make choice of. The time is now come when I shall fulfil my promise to you, and I expect you to do the like to me:

I have found a young woman in the neighbourhood after my own heart, whom I intend to espouse and bring home in a very few days. Let it be your care, then, to do honour to my nuptials, and to respect her as your sovereign lady; so that I may be satisfied with the performance of your promise, even as you are with that of mine." The people all declared themselves pleased and promised to regard her in all things as their mistress. Afterwards they made preparations for a most noble feast, and the like did the prince; inviting all his relations, and the great lords in all parts and provinces about him: he had also most rich and costly robes made, shaped by a person that seemed to be of the same size with his intended spouse; and provided a girdle, ring, and fine coronet, with everything requisite for a bride. And when the day appointed was come, about the third hour he mounted his horse, attended by all his friends and vassals; and having everything in readiness, he said, "My lords and gentlemen, it is now time to go for my new spouse." So on they rode to the village, and when he was come near the father's house, he saw her carrying some water from the well, in great haste, to go afterwards with some of her acquaintance to see the new marchioness; when he called her by name, which was Griselda, and inquired where her father was. She modestly replied, "My gracious lord, he is in the house."

He then alighted from his horse, commanding them all to wait for him, and went alone into the cottage, where he found the father, who was called Giannucolo, and said to him, "Honest man, I am come to espouse thy daughter; but would first ask her some questions before thee." He then inquired whether she would make it her study to please him, and not be uneasy at any time, whatever he should do or say; and whether she would always be obedient; with more to that purpose. To which she answered, "Yes." He then led her out by the hand, and made her strip before them all; and ordering the rich apparel to be brought which he had provided, he had her clothed completely, and a coronet set upon her head, all disordered as her hair was; after which, everyone being in amaze, he said, "Behold, this is the person whom I intend for my wife, provided she will accept of me for her husband." Then, turning towards her, who stood quite abashed, "Will you," said he, "Have me for your husband?" She replied, "Yes, if so please your lordship."—"Well," he replied, "and I take you for my wife." So he espoused her in that public manner, and mounting her on a palfrey, conducted her honourably to his palace, celebrating the nuptials with as much pomp and grandeur as though he had been married to the daughter of the King of France; and the young bride shewed apparently that with her garments

she had changed both her mind and behaviour. She had a most agreeable person, and was so amiable, so good-natured withal, that she seemed rather a lord's daughter than that of a poor shepherd; at which everyone that knew her before was greatly surprised. She was, too, so obedient to her husband, and so obliging in all respects, that he thought himself the happiest man in the world; and to her subjects likewise so gracious and condescending that they all honoured and loved her as their own lives; praying for her health and prosperity; and declaring, contrary to their former opinion, that Gualtieri was the most prudent and sharp-sighted prince in the whole world: for that no one could have discerned such virtues under a mean habit and country disguise, but himself. In a very short time, her discreet behaviour and good works were the common subject of discourse, not in that country only, but everywhere else; and what had been objected to the prince, with regard to his marrying her, now took a contrary turn. They had not lived long together before she proved with child, and at length brought forth a daughter, for which he made great rejoicings. But soon afterwards a new fancy came into his head; and that was, to make a trial of her patience by long and intolerable sufferings; so he began with harsh words, and an appearance of great uneasiness; telling her that his subjects

were greatly displeased with her for her mean parentage, especially as they saw she bore children; and that they did nothing but murmur at the daughter already born. Which, when she heard, without changing countenance or her resolution in any respect, she replied, "My lord, pray dispose of me as you think most for your honour and happiness: I shall entirely acquiesce, knowing myself to be meaner than the meanest of the people, and that I was altogether unworthy of that dignity to which your favour was pleased to advance me." This was very agreeable to the prince, seeing that she was no way elevated with the honour he had conferred upon her. Afterwards, having often told her, in general terms, that his subjects could not bear with the daughter that was born of her, he sent one of his servants, whom he had instructed what to do, who, with a very sorrowful countenance, said to her, "Madam, I must either lose my own life, or obey my lord's commands: now he has ordered me to take your daughter, and——" without saying any more.

She, hearing these words, and noting the fellow's looks, remembering also what she had heard before from her lord, concluded that he had orders to destroy the child. So she took it out of the cradle, kissed it, and gave it her blessing; when, without changing countenance, though her heart throbbed with maternal affections, she ten-

derly laid it in the servant's arms, and said, "Take it, and do what thy lord and mine has commanded; but prithee leave it not to be devoured by the fowls or wild beasts, unless that be his will." Taking the child, he acquainted the prince with what she said; who was greatly surprised at her constancy, and he sent the same person with it to a relation at Bologna, desiring her, without revealing whose child it was, to see it carefully brought up and educated. Afterwards the lady became with child the second time, and was delivered of a son, at which he was extremely pleased.—But, not satisfied with what he had already done, he began to grieve and persecute her still more; saying one day to her, seemingly much out of temper, "Since thou has brought me this son, I am able to live no longer with my people; for they mutiny to that degree, that a poor shepherd's grandson is to succeed, and be their lord after me, that, unless I would run the risk of being driven out of my dominions, I must be obliged to dispose of this child as I did the other; and then to send thee away, in order to take a wife more suitable to me." She heard this with a great deal of resignation, making only this reply: "My lord, study only your own ease and happiness, without the least care for me; for nothing is agreeable to me but what is pleasing to yourself." Not many days after, he sent for the son in the same man-

ner as he had done for the daughter; and, seeming also as if he had procured him to be destroyed, had him conveyed to Bologna, to be taken care of with the daughter. This she bore with the same resolution as before, at which the prince wondered greatly, declaring to himself that no other woman was capable of doing the like. And, were it not that he had observed her extremely fond of her children, whilst that was agreeable to him, he should have thought it want of affection in her; but he saw it was only her entire obedience and condescension. The people, imagining that the children were both put to death, blamed him to the last degree, thinking him the most cruel of men, and shewing great compassion for the lady. Who, whenever she was in company with the ladies of her acquaintance, that they condoled with her for her loss, she would only say, "It was not my will, but his who begot them." But more years being now passed, and he resolving to make the last trial of her patience, declared, before many people, that he could no longer bear to keep Griselda as his wife, owning that he had done very foolishly, and like a young man, in marrying her, and that he meant to solicit the pope for a dispensation to take another, and send her away: for which he was much blamed by many worthy persons; but he said nothing in return only that it should so. She, hearing this, and expecting to

go to her father's, and possibly tend the cattle as she had done before; whilst she saw some other lady possessed of him whom she dearly loved and honoured, was perhaps secretly grieved; but as she had withstood other strokes of fortune, so she determined resolutely to do now. Soon afterwards, Gualtieri had counterfeit letters come to him, as from Rome, acquainting all his people that his holiness thereby dispensed with his marrying another, and turning away Griselda; he had her brought before them, when he said, "Woman, by the pope's leave I may dispose of thee, and take another wife. As my ancestors, then, have been all sovereign princes of this country, and thine only peasants, I intend to keep thee no longer, but to send thee back to thy father's cottage, with the same portion which thou broughtest me; and afterwards to make choice of one more suitable in quality to myself." It was with the utmost difficulty she could now refrain from tears; and she replied, "My lord, I was always sensible that my servile condition would no way accord with your high rank and descent. For what I have been, I own myself indebted to Providence and you; I considered it as a favour lent me; you are now pleased to demand it back; I, therefore, willingly restore it. Behold the ring with which you espoused me; I deliver it to you. You bid me take the dowry back which I brought you; you will have no

need for a teller to count it, nor I for a purse to put it in, much less a sumpter-horse to carry it away; for I have not forgotten that you took me naked; and if you think it decent to expose that body which has borne you two children in that manner, I am contented: but I would entreat you, as a recompense for my virginity, which I brought you, and do not carry away, that you would please to let me have one shift over and above my dowry." He, though ready to weep, yet put on a stern countenance, and said, "Thou shalt have one only then." And, notwithstanding the people all desired that she might have an old gown, to keep her body from shame who had been his wife thirteen years and upwards, yet it was all in vain. So she left his palace in that manner, and returned weeping to her father's, to the great grief of all who saw her. The poor man, never supposing that the prince would keep her long as his wife, and expecting this thing to happen every day, had safely laid up the garments of which she had been despoiled the day he espoused her. He now brought them to her, and she put them on, and went as usual about her father's little household affairs, bearing their fierce trial of adverse fortune with the greatest courage imaginable. The prince then gave it out that he was to espouse a daughter of one of the counts of Panago; and, seeming as if he made great preparation for his nuptials, he sent

for Griselda to come to him, and said to her, "I am going to bring this lady home whom I have just married, and intend to show her all possible respect at her first coming: thou knowest that I have no women with me able to set out the rooms, and do many other things which are requisite on so solemn an occasion. As, therefore, thou art best acquainted with the state of the house, I would have thee make such provision as thou shalt judge proper, and invite what ladies thou wilt, even as though thou wert mistress of the house; and when the marriage is ended, return thee home to thy father's again." Though these words pierced like daggers to the heart of Griselda, who was unable to part with her love for the prince so easily as she had done her great fortune, yet she replied, "My lord, I am ready to fulfil all your commands." She then went into the palace, in her coarse attire, from whence she had but just before departed in her shift, and with her own hands did she begin to sweep, and set all the rooms to rights, cleaning the stools and benches in the hall like the meanest servant, and directing what was to be done in the kitchen, never giving over till everything was in order, and as it ought to be. After this was done, she invited, in the prince's name, all the ladies in the country to come to the feast. And on the day appointed for the marriage, meanly clad as she was, she received them

in the most genteel and cheerful manner imaginable.

Now Gualtieri, who had his children carefully brought up at Bologna (the girl being about twelve years old, and one of the prettiest creatures that ever was seen, and the boy six), had sent to his kinswoman there, to desire she would bring them, with an honourable retinue, to Saluzzo, giving it out all the way she came that she was bringing the young lady to be married to him, without letting any one know to the contrary.

Accordingly, they all set forwards, attended by a goodly train of gentry; and, after travelling some days, reached Saluzzo about dinner-time, when they found the whole country assembled, waiting to see their new lady. The young lady was most graciously received by all the women present; and being come into the hall where the tables were all covered, Griselda, meanly dressed as she was went cheerfully to meet her, saying, "Your ladyship is most kindly welcome." The ladies, who had greatly importuned the prince, though to no purpose, to let Griselda be in a room by herself, or else that she might have some of her own clothes, and not appear before strangers in that manner, were now seated, and going to be served round; whilst the young lady was universally admired, and everyone said that the prince had made a good change; but

Griselda in particular highly commended both her and her brother. The marquis now thinking that he had seen enough in regard to his wife's patience, and perceiving that in all her trials she was still the same, being persuaded likewise that this proceeded from no want of understanding in her, because he knew her to be singularly prudent, he thought it time to take her from that anguish which he supposed she might conceal under her firm and constant deportment. So, making her come before all the company, he said, with a smile, "What thinkest thou, Griselda, of my bride?" "My lord," she replied, "I like her extremely well; and if she be as prudent as she is fair, you may be the happiest man in the world with her: but I most humbly beg you would not take those heart-breaking measures with this lady as you did with your last wife; because she is young, and has been tenderly educated, whereas the other was inured to hardships from a child."

Gualtieri perceiving, that though Griselda thought that person was to be his wife, that she nevertheless answered him with great humility and sweetness of temper, he made her sit down by him, and said, "Griselda, it is now time for you to reap the fruit of your long patience, and that they who have reputed me to be cruel, unjust, and a monster in nature, may know that what I have done has been all along with a view to teach you how to behave as a wife; to shew

them how to choose and keep a wife; and, lastly, to secure my own ease and quiet as long as we live together, which I was apprehensive might have been endangered by my marrying. Therefore I had a mind to prove you by harsh and injurious treatment; and not being sensible that you have ever transgressed my will, either in word or deed, I now seem to have met with that happiness I desired: I intend, then, to restore in one hour what I have taken away from you in many, and to make you the sweetest recompense for the many bitter pangs I have caused you to suffer. Accept, therefore, this young lady, whom you thought my spouse, and her brother, as your children and mine. They are the same which you and many others believed that I had been the means of cruelly murdering; and I am your husband, who love and value you above all things; assuring myself that no person in the world can be happier in a wife than I am."

With this he embraced her most affectionately, when, rising up together (she weeping for joy), they went where their daughter was sitting, quite astonished with these things, and tenderly saluted both her and her brother, undeceiving them and the whole company. At this the women all arose, overjoyed, from the tables, and taking Griselda into the chamber, they clothed her with her own noble apparel, and as a marchioness, resembling such an one even in rags, and brought her into

the hall. And being extremely rejoiced with her son and daughter, and every one expressing the utmost satisfaction at what had come to pass, the feasting was prolonged many days. The marquis was judged a very wise man, though abundantly too severe, and the trial of his lady most intolerable; but as for Griselda, she was beyond compare. In a few days the Count da Panago returned to Bologna, and the marquis took Giannucolo from his drudgery, and maintained him as his father-in-law and so he lived very comfortably to a good old age.

Gualtieri afterwards married his daughter to one of equal nobility, continuing the rest of his life with Griselda, and shewing her all the respect and honour that was possible. What can we say, then, but that Divine spirits may descend from heaven into the meanest cottages; whilst royal palaces shall produce such as seem rather adapted to have the care of hogs, than the government of men. Who but Griselda could, not only without a tear, but even with seeming satisfaction, undergo the most rigid and unheard of trials of her husband? Many women there are who, if turned out of doors naked in that manner, would have procured themselves fine clothes, adorning at once their own persons and their husbands' brows.

GIOVANNI BOCCACCIO.

THE PRISONER IN THE CAUCASUS

I

A GENTLEMAN of the name of Zhilin was serving in the Caucasus as an officer. One day he received a letter from home. His aged mother wrote to him: "I am growing old and should like to see my dear little son before I die. Come to me, I pray you, if it be only to bury me, and then in God's name enter the service again. And I have found a nice bride for you besides; she is sensible, good, and has property. You may fall in love with her perhaps, and you may marry her and be able to retire."

Zhilin fell a-musing: "Yes, indeed, the old lady has been ailing lately; she might never live to see me. Yes, I'll go, and if the girl is nice I may marry her into the bargain."

So he went to his colonel, obtained leave of absence, took leave of his comrades, gave his soldiers four pitchers of vodka to drink his health, and prepared to be off.

There was war in the Caucasus then. The roads were impassable night and day. Scarce any of the Russians could go in or out of the fortress but the Tatars would kill them or carry

them off into the mountains. So it was commanded that twice a week a military escort should proceed from fortress to fortress with the people in the midst of it.

The affair happened in the summer. At dawn of day the baggage-wagons assembled in the fortress, the military escort marched out, and the whole company took the road. Zhilin went on horseback, and his wagon with his things was among the baggage.

The distance to be traversed was twenty miles, but the caravan moved but slowly. Sometimes it was soldiers who stopped, sometimes a wheel flew off one of the baggage-wagons, or a horse wouldn't go—and then they all had to stop and wait.

The sun had already passed the meridian, and the caravan had only gone half the distance. There was nothing but heat and dust, the sun regularly burned, and there was no shelter to be had. All around nothing but the naked steppe —not a village; not a wayside bush.

Zhilin had galloped on in front; he had now stopped, and was waiting for the cavalcade to come up. Then he heard a horn blow in the rear, and knew that they had stopped again. Then thought Zhilin, "Why not go on by one's self without the soldiers? I've a good horse beneath me, and if I stumble upon the Tatars—I can make a bolt for it. Or shall I not go?"

He stood there considering, and up there came trotting another mounted officer, called Kostuilin, with a musket, and he said:

"Let us go on alone, Zhilin. I can't stand it any longer; I want some food; the heat is stifling, and my shirt is continually sticking to me."

This Kostuilin, by the way, was a thick, heavy, red-faced man, and the sweat was pouring from him. Zhilin thought for a moment, and then said:

"Is your musket loaded?"

"Yes, it is loaded."

"Well, we'll go, but on one condition—we must keep together."

And they cantered on in front along the road. They went through the steppe, and as they chatted together they kept glancing on every side of them. They could see for a great distance around them.

The steppe at last had come to an end, and the way lay toward a ravine between two mountains.

"What are you looking at? Let us go straight on!" said Kostuilin. But Zhilin did not listen to him.

"No," said he, "you just wait below and I'll go up and have a look round."

And he urged his horse to the left up the mountain. The horse beneath Zhilin was a good hunter (he had bought it from the horse-fold while still a foal for a hundred roubles, and had

broken it in himself) ; it carried him up the steep ascent as if on wings. He needed but a single glance around—there, right in front of them, not a furlong ahead, was a whole crowd of Tatars—thirty men at least. He no sooner saw them than he turned right about, but the Tatars had seen him too, and posted after him, drawing their muskets while in full career. Zhilin galloped down the slope as fast as his horse's legs could carry him, at the same time shouting to Kostuilin:

"Out with the muskets! And you, my beauty" —he was thinking of his horse—"you, my beauty, spread yourself out and don't knock your foot against anything, for if you stumble now we're lost. Let me only get to my musket, and I'm hanged if I surrender."

But Kostuilin, instead of waiting, bolted off at full speed in the direction of the fortress as soon as he beheld the Tatars. He lashed his horse first on one side and then on the other. Only the strong sweep of her tail was visible in the dust.

Zhilin perceived that he was in a bit of a hole. His musket was gone, and with a simple sabre nothing could be done. He drew his horse on in the direction of the Russian soldiers—there was just a chance of getting away. He saw that six of them were galloping away to cut him off. He had a good horse under him, but they had still better, and they were racing their hardest to bar his way. He began to hesitate, and wanted

to turn in another direction, but his horse had lost her head, he could not control her, and she was rushing right upon them. He saw a Tatar with a red beard on a grey horse approaching him. The Tatar uttered a shrill cry and gnashed his teeth; his musket was all ready.

"Well," thought Zhilin, "I know what you are, you devils; if you take me alive you'll put me in a dungeon and whip me. I'll not be taken alive."

Zhilin was small of stature, but he was brave. Drawing his sabre, he urged his horse straight at the red-bearded Tatar, thinking to himself, "I'll either ride down his horse or fell him with my sabre."

But Zhilin never got up to the Tatar horse. They fired upon him from behind with their muskets and shot his horse. She fell to the ground with a crash, and Zhilin was thrown off her back. He tried to rise, but two strong-smelling Tatars were already sitting upon him, and twisting his arms behind his back. He writhed and wriggled, and threw off the Tatars, but then three more leaped off their horses and sprang upon him, and began beating him about the head with the butt-ends of their muskets. It grew dark before his eyes, and he began to feel faint. Then the Tatars seized him, rifled his saddle-bags, fastened his arms behind his back, tying them with a Tatar knot, and dragged him to the sad-

dle. They snatched off his hat, they pulled off his boots, examined everything, extorted his money and his watch, and ripped up all his clothes. Zhilin glanced at his horse. She, his dearly beloved comrade, lay just as she had fallen, on her back, with kicking feet which vainly tried to reach the ground. There was a hole in her head, and out of this hole the black blood gushed with a hiss—for several yards around the dust was wet.

One of the Tatars went to the horse and proceeded to take the saddle from her back. She went on kicking all the time, and he drew forth a knife and cut her windpipe. There was a hissing sound from her throat; she shivered all over, and the breath of her life was gone.

The Tatars took off the saddle and bridle. The Tatar with the red beard mounted his horse and the others put Zhilin up behind him. To prevent his falling off, they fastened him by a thong to the Tatar's belt, and carried him away into the mountains.

So there sat Zhilin behind the Tatar, and at every moment he was jolted, and his very nose came in contact with the Tatar's malodorous back. All that he could see in front of him, indeed, was the sturdy Tatar's back, his sinewy, shaven neck all bluish beneath his hat. Zhilin's head was much battered, and the blood kept trickling into his eyes. And it was impossible

for him to right himself on his horse or wipe away the blood. His arms were twisted so tightly that his very collar-bone was in danger of breaking.

They travelled for a long time from mountain to mountain, crossed a ford, diverged from the road, and entered a ravine.

Zhilin would have liked to mark the road by which they were taking him, but his eyes were clotted with blood, and he could not turn round properly.

It began to grow dark. They crossed another river and began to ascend the rocky mountain, and then came a smell of smoke and the barking of dogs!

At last they came to the Tatar village. The Tatars dismounted from their horses, and a crowd of children assembled, who surrounded Zhilin, fell a-yelling and making merry, and took up stones to cast at him.

The Tatar drove away the children, took Zhilin from his horse, and called a workman. Up came a hatchet-faced Tatar of the Nogai tribe, clad only in a shirt, and as the shirt was torn the whole of his breast was bare. The Tatar gave some orders to him. The workman brought a *kolodka*—that is to say, two oaken blocks fastened together by iron rings, and in one of the rings a cramping-iron and a lock. Then they undid Zhilin's hands, attached the *kolodka* to his feet, led him into an outhouse, thrust him into it,

and fastened the door. Zhilin fell upon a dung-heap. For a time he lay where he fell, then he fumbled his way in the dark to the softest place he could find, and lay down there.

II

Zhilin scarcely slept at all through the night. It was the season of short nights. He could see it growing light through a rift in the wall. Zhilin arose, made the rift a little bigger, and looked out.

Through the rift the high road was visible going down the mountain-side; to the right was a Tatar hut, with two hamlets close by. A black dog lay upon the threshold; a goat with her kids passed along, whisking their tails. He saw a Tatar milkmaid coming down from the mountains in a flowered, belted blouse, and trousers and boots, with her head covered by a kaftan, bearing on it a large tin pitcher full of water. She walked with curved back and head bent forward, and led by the hand a small, closely cropped Tatar boy in a little shirt.

The Tatar girl took the water to the hut, and out came the Tatar of yesterday evening, with the red beard, in a silken tunic, with slippers on his naked feet and a silver knife in his leather girdle. On his head he wore a high, black sheepskin hat, flattened down behind. He came out,

stretched himself, and stroked his bountiful red beard. He stayed there for a while, gave some orders to his labourer, and went off somewhither.

Next there passed by two children on horses which they had just watered. The horses' nozzles were wet. Then some more closely cropped youngsters ran by in nothing but shirts, without hose, and they collected into a group, went to the outhouse, took up a long twig and thrust it through the rift in the wall. Zhilin gave such a shout at them that the children screamed in chorus and took to their heels; a gleam of naked little knees was the last that was seen of them.

But Zhilin wanted drink; his throat was parched and dry. "If only they would come to examine me," thought he. He listened—they were opening the outhouse. The red-bearded Tatar appeared, and with him came another, smaller in stature, a blackish sort of little man. His eyes were bright and black, he was ruddy and had a small-cropped beard, his face was merry, he was all smiles. The swarthy man was dressed even better than the other; his silken tunic was blue and trimmed with galoon, the large dagger in his belt was of silver, his red morocco slippers were also trimmed with silver. Moreover, thick outer slippers covered the finer inner ones. He wore a lofty hat of white lamb's-wool.

The red-bearded Tatar came in and there was some conversation, and apparently a dispute be-

gan. He leaned his elbows on the gate, fingered his hanger, and glanced furtively at Zhilin like a hungry wolf. But the swarthy man—he was a quick, lively fellow, who seemed to move upon springs—came straight up to Zhilin, sat down on his heels, grinned, showing all his teeth, patted him on the shoulder, and began to jabber something in a peculiar way of his own, blinking his eyes, clicking with his tongue, and saying repeatedly:

"Korosho urus! Korosho urus!" (A fine Russian!)

Zhilin did not understand a word of it, and all he said was:

"I am thirsty; give me a drink of water!"

The swarthy man laughed. "Korosho urus!" he said again, babbling away in his own peculiar manner.

Zhilin tried to make them understand by a pantomime with his hands and lips that he wanted something to drink.

Understanding at last, the swarthy man went out and called:

"Dina! Dina!"

A very thin, slender girl, about thirteen years of age, with a face very like the swarthy man's, then appeared. Plainly she was the swarthy man's daughter. She also had black sparkling eyes and a ruddy complexion. She was dressed in a long, blue blouse, with white sleeves, and without a

girdle. The folds, sleeves, and breast of her garment were beautifully trimmed. She also wore trousers and slippers, and the inner slippers were protected by outer slippers with high heels. Round her neck she wore a necklace of Russian half-roubles. Her head was uncovered, her hair was black, and in her hair was a ribbon, from which dangled a metal plaque and a silver rouble.

Her father gave her some orders. She ran out, and returned again immediately with a tin pail. She handed the water to Zhilin herself, plumping down on her heels, bending right forward so that her shoulders were lower than her knees. There she sat, staring at Zhilin with wide-open eyes as he drank, just as if he were some wild animal.

Zhilin gave the pail back to her, and back she bounded like a wild goat. Even her father couldn't help laughing. Then he sent her somewhere or other. She took the pail, ran off, and came back with some unleavened bread on a little round platter, and again she crouched down, all humped forward, gazing at Zhilin with all her eyes.

Then all the Tatars went out and closed the door behind them.

After a little while the Nogai Tatar came to Zhilin and said:

"Come along, master! Come along!"

He also did not know Russian. It was plain

to Zhilin, however, that he was ordering him to come somewhither.

Zhilin followed him, still wearing the *kolodka*. He limped all the way; to walk was impossible, as he had constantly to twist his foot to one side. So Zhilin followed the Nogai Tatar outside. He saw the Tatar village—ten houses, with their mosque which had a tower. Before one house stood three saddled horses. A tiny boy was holding their bridles. All at once the swarthy man came leaping out of his house, and waved his hand to Zhilin signifying him to approach. The Tatar was smiling, jabbering after his fashion, and quickly disappeared into the house again. Zhilin entered the house. The living-room was a good one; the walls were of smoothly polished clay. Variegated pillows were piled up against the front wall; rich carpets hung up at the entrance on each side; arms of various sorts, such as pistols and sabres, all of fine metal, were hanging on the carpets. In one corner was a little stove level with the ground. The earthen floor was as clean as a threshing-floor; the front corner was all covered with felt; on the felt were carpets, and on the carpets soft cushions. And on the carpets, in nothing but their slippers, sat the Tatars: there were five of them, the red-bearded man, the swarthy man, and three guests. Soft bulging cushions had been placed behind the backs of them all, and in front of them, on a

small platter, were boltered pancakes, beef distributed in little cups, and the Tatar beverage, *buza,* in a pail. They ate with their hands, and all their hands were in the meat.

The swarthy man leaped to his feet, and bade Zhilin sit down apart, not on the carpet, but on the bare floor; then he went back to his carpet, and regaled his guests with pancakes and *buza.* The labourer made Zhilin sit down in the place assigned to him; he himself took off his outer slippers, placed them side by side at the door, where the other slippers stood, then sat down on the felt nearer to his masters; he watched how they ate, and his mouth watered as he wiped it. When the Tatars had eaten the pancakes, a Tatar woman appeared in just the same sort of blouse that the girl had worn, and in trousers also; her head was covered with a cloth.

She took away the meat and the pancakes, and brought round a good washing-vessel, and a kettle with a very narrow spout. The Tatars then began washing their hands; then they folded their arms, squatted down on their knees, belched in every direction, and recited prayers. Then they talked among themselves. Finally, one of the guests turned toward Zhilin, and began to speak in Russian.

"Kazi Muhammed took thee," said he, pointing to the red-bearded Tatar, "and has sold thee

to Abdul Murad," and he indicated the swarthy Tatar. "Abdul Murad is now thy master."

Zhilin was silent.

Then Abdul Murad began to speak, and kept on pointing at Zhilin, and laughed and said, several times, "Soldat urus! Korosho urus!" (The Russian soldier! The fine Russian!)

The interpreter said:

"He bids thee write a letter home in order that they may send a ransom for thee. As soon as they send the money, thou shalt be set free."

Zhilin thought for a moment, and then said:

"How much ransom does he require?"

The Tatars talked among themselves, and then the interpreter said:

"Three thousand moneys."

"No," said Zhilin, "I cannot pay that."

Abdul started up and began waving his hands, and said something to Zhilin—they all thought he understood. The interpreter interpreted, saying:

"How much wilt thou give?"

Zhilin reflected, and then said, "Five hundred roubles."

At this the Tatars chattered a great deal and all together. Abdul began to screech at the red-bearded Tatar, and got so excited that the spittle trickled from his mouth. The red-bearded Tatar only blinked his eyes and clicked with his tongue.

Then they were silent again, and the interpreter said:

"Thy master thinks a ransom of five hundred roubles too little. He himself paid two hundred roubles for thee. Kazi Muhammed owed him that, and he took thee in discharge of the debt. Three thousand roubles is the least they will let thee go for. And if thou dost not write they will put thee in the dungeon and punish thee with scourging."

"What am I to do with them? This is even worse than I thought," said Zhilin to himself. Then he leaped to his feet and said:

"Tell him, thou dog, that if he wants to frighten me, I won't give him a kopeck, neither will I write at all. I have never feared, and I will not fear you now, you dog."

The interpreter interpreted, and again they all began talking at once.

For a long time they debated, and then the swarthy man leaped to his feet and came to Zhilin.

"Urus!" said he, "dzhiget, dzhiget urus!" And then he laughed.

"Dzhiget" in their language signifies "youth."

Then he said something to the interpreter, and the interpreter said, "Give a thousand roubles!"

Zhilin stood to his guns. "More than five hundred I will not give," said he. "You may

kill me if you like, but you'll get no more out of me."

The Tatars fell a-talking together again, then they sent out the labourer for someone, and kept looking at the door and at Zhilin. Presently the workman came back and brought with him a man —stout, bare-legged, and cheery-looking; he also had a *kolodka* fastened to his legs.

Then Zhilin sighed indeed, for he recognized Kostuilin. So they had taken him, too, then! The Tatars placed them side by side, they began talking to each other, and the Tatars were silent and looked on. Zhilin related how it had fared with him; Kostuilin told him that his horse had sunk under him, that his musket had missed fire, and that that selfsame Abdul had chased and captured him.

Abdul leaped to his feet, pointed at Kostuilin, and said something. The interpreter interpreted that they both of them had now one master, and whichever of them paid up first should be released first.

"Look, now," said he to Zhilin, "thou makest such a to-do, but thy comrade takes it quietly; he has written a letter home telling them to send five thousand roubles. Look, now, he shall be fed well and shall be respected."

"My comrade can do as he likes," said Zhilin; "no doubt he is rich, but I am not rich. What I

have said that I will do. You may kill me if you like, but you will get little profit out of that. I will write for not more than five hundred roubles."

They were silent for a while. Suddenly Abdul leaped up and produced a small coffer, took out a pen, a piece of paper and ink, forced them upon Zhilin, tapped him on the shoulder, and, pointing to them, said, "Write!" He had agreed to take five hundred roubles.

"Wait a bit," said Zhilin to the interpreter; "tell him that he must feed us well, clothe and shoe us decently, and let us be together—we shall be happier then—and take off the *kolodka.*" He himself then looked at his master and laughed. And his master laughed likewise. He heard the interpreter out, and then said, "I will give you the best of clothing, a Circassian costume and good boots—you might be married in them. And I'll feed you like princes. And if you want to dwell together—well, you can dwell in the outhouse. I can't take off the *kolodka*—you would run away. Only at night can I take it off." Then he rushed forward and tapped him on the shoulder. "Thy good is my good!" said he.

Then Zhilin wrote the letter, and he wrote no address on the letter, so that it should not go. But he thought to himself:

"I'll run away."

Then they led away Zhilin and Kostuilin to

the outhouse, brought them maize-straw to spread on the ground, water in a pitcher, bread, two old Circassian costumes, and two pairs of tattered military boots. They had plainly been taken from off the feet of slain soldiers. At night they took off their *kolodki* and fastened the door.

III

Zhilin and his comrade lived there for a whole month. And Zhilin's master was as radiant as ever. "Ivan," he would say, laughing, "thy good is my good—Abdul's good." They were badly fed all the same, getting nothing but unleavened bread, made from indifferent meal, and tough and doughy hearth-cakes.

Kostuilin wrote home once more, and waited for the money to be sent, in utter weariness. The whole day they sat in the outhouse and counted the days it would take the letter to arrive, or else they slept. Zhilin, however, knew very well that his letter would not arrive, and he did not write another.

"Where, I should like to know," thought he, "would my mother be able to scrape together so much money to buy me out? It was as much as she could do to live on what I sent her. If she had to collect five hundred roubles she would come to grief altogether. With God's help, I'll get out of this hobble myself."

So he looked carefully about and devised every possible method of escaping. He would go about the village whistling, or he would sit down here and there and manufacture various sorts of little things, or model a puppet out of clay, or weave baskets from twigs. For Zhilin was a master at all sorts of handiwork.

Once he modelled a puppet with a nose, arms, and legs in a Tatar shirt, and put this puppet on the roof of the outhouse.

Presently the Tatar women came out to draw water. Dina, the daughter of the house, saw the puppet and called the Tatar women to look at it. They put down their pitchers, looked at it long, and laughed aloud. Zhilin took up the puppet and offered it to them. They laughed still more, but were afraid to take it. So he put the puppet on the roof, went into the outhouse, and watched to see what would happen.

Dina then came running up, glanced all around seized the puppet, and ran away with it. Next morning at dawn he saw Dina across the threshold with the puppet. She had already adorned the puppet with all sorts of parti-coloured rags, and was rocking it as if it were a child, singing a lullaby of her own invention. Then the old woman came out and scolded her, snatched away the puppet, smashed it, and sent Dina off to work somewhere.

Then Zhilin made another and even better

puppet and gave it to Dina. Presently Dina came again, bringing with her a little pitcher which she put on the floor, and then sat down and looked at Zhilin, and, smiling all over, kept pointing at the pitcher.

"Why is she so delighted?" thought Zhilin. Then he took up the pitcher and began to drink. He thought it was water, but it was milk. He drank all the milk. "Khorosho!" (good) said he. How rejoiced Dina was then!

"Khorosho, Ivan, Khorosho," she repeated, and, leaping to her feet, she clapped her hands, snatched up the pitcher, and ran off.

And from thenceforth she, every day, brought him some milk privately. Now the Tatars used to make cheese-cakes out of goats' milk and dried them on their roofs, and these cheese-cakes she also supplied him with secretly. And once, when the master of the house slaughtered a sheep, she brought him a bit of mutton in her sleeve, flung it down before him, and ran off.

Occasionally there were heavy storms, and the rain poured down for a whole hour as if out of a bucket, and all the streams grew turbid and overflowed. Where there had been a ford there were then three ells of water, and the stones were whirled from their places. Streams then flowed everywhere, and there was a distant roar in the mountains. And so when the storm had passed over, the whole village was full of watercourses.

After one of these storms Zhilin asked his master to lend him a knife, carved out a little cylinder and a little board, attached a wheel to them, and fastened a puppet at each end of the wheel.

The girls thereupon brought him rags, and he dressed up one of his puppets as a man and the other as a woman, fastened them well in, and placed the wheel in the stream, whereupon the wheel turned and the puppets leaped up and down.

The whole village assembled to look at them. The little boys came, and the little girls and the women, and at last the Tatars themselves, and they clicked their tongues and said, "Aye! Urus! Aye! Ivan!"

Now Abdul had some broken Russian watches. He called Zhilin, pointed at these watches, and clicked with his tongue. Zhilin said:

"Give them to me and I'll repair them!"

He took them to pieces with the help of his knife, examined them, put them together again, and returned them to their owner. The watches were now going.

Zhilin's master was greatly delighted at this, and brought him his old tunic, which was all in rags, and gave it to him to mend. What could Zhilin do but take and mend it? The same night its owner was able to cover himself with it.

From henceforth Zhilin had the reputation of a master-craftsman. The people used now to come

to him from distant villages; one sent his matchlock or his pistol to Zhilin to be mended, another sent his watch or clock. His master even gave him various utensils to mend, such as snuffers, gimlets, and other things.

Once one of the Tatars fell ill, and they sent for Zhilin to see him.

"Come and cure him!" said they.

Now Zhilin knew nothing at all about curing. Nevertheless, he went, looked at the man, and thought, "Who knows, perhaps he may get well by himself!" So he went back to the outhouse, got water and sand, and mixed them both together. Then he whispered something over the water in the Tatar's presence and gave him the mixture to drink. Fortunately for him, the Tatar recovered. Then Zhilin began to stand very high indeed in their opinion. And these Tatars, who had got used to him, used to cry, "Ivan! Ivan!" whenever they wanted him, and all of them treated him as if he were some pet domestic animal.

But the red-bearded Tatar did not like Zhilin. Whenever he saw him he would frown and turn away, even if he did not scold him outright. Now these Tatars had an old chief who did not live in the village, but up in the mountains. The only time when he saw Zhilin was when he came to pray to God in the mosque. He was small in stature, and a white handkerchief was always

wound around his turban; his beard and moustaches were clipped short and as white as down; his face was red like a brick and wrinkled. He had the curved nose of a vulture, grey, evil eyes, and no teeth, except a couple of fangs. He used to come in his turban, leaning on his crutch, and glaring about him like an old wolf. Whenever he saw Zhilin he began to snarl and turned away.

Once Zhilin went up the mountain to see how the old chief lived. As he went along a little path he saw a little garden surrounded by a stone fence with wild cherry and peach trees looking over it, and inside a little hut with a flat roof. Zhilin approached nearer, and then he saw beehives made of plaited straw—*ului* they called them—and the bees flying about and humming. And the little old man was on his tiny knees doing something to the hives. Zhilin raised himself a little higher to have a better look, and his *kolodka* grated. The little old man looked round, and whined aloud; then he drew a pistol out of his girdle, and fired point-blank at Zhilin. After firing, he hid behind a stone.

Next morning the old man came down to Zhilin's master to complain of him. Zhilin's master called him and said to him with a laugh:

"Why didst thou go to the old man?"

"I did him no harm," said Zhilin. "I only wanted to see how he lived."

Zhilin's master interpreted.

The old man was very angry, however. He hissed and gabbled; his two fangs protruded, and he shook his fist at Zhilin.

Zhilin did not understand it at all. All he understood was that the old man bade his master kill all the Russians and not keep any of them in the village. Finally, the old man went away.

Zhilin now began to ask his master who the little old man was, and this is what the master told him:

"This is a great man. He was our foremost warrior, and has killed many Russians; he is also rich. Once he had eight sons, and they all dwelt together in one village. The Russians came, destroyed the village, and slew seven of his sons. One son only remained, and he surrendered to the Russians. Then the old man went away, and surrendered himself also to the Russians. He lived with them for three months, found out where his son was, slew him, and ran away. From thenceforth he renounced warfare and went to Mecca—to pray to God. Hence he has his turban. Whoever has been to Mecca is called Hadji, and may put on a turban. He does not love thee. He bade me slay thee, but I will not slay thee, because I want to make money out of thee; and, besides, I have begun to love thee, Ivan, and so far from killing thee, I would not let thee go away at all if I hadn't given my word

upon it." He laughed, and then he added in Russian, "The welfare of thee, Ivan, is the welfare of me, Abdul!"

IV

So Zhilin lived like this for a month. In the daytime he went about the village, or made all sorts of things with his hands; and when night came, and all was silent in the village, he began digging inside his outhouse. Digging was difficult because of the rock, but he fretted away the rock with a file, and dug a hole under the wall, through which, at the proper time, he meant to crawl.

"If only I knew the place fairly well," he said to himself; "if only I knew in which direction to go. But the Tatars never give themselves away."

One day he chose a time when his master had gone away, and after dinner he went up the mountain behind the village, wanting to survey the whole place from there. But when his master went away he had commanded a lad to follow Zhilin wherever he went and not lose sight of him. So the youngster ran after Zhilin, and cried, "Don't go! Father didn't tell you to. I'll call the people this instant!"

Zhilin set about persuading him.

"I'm not going far," said he; "I only want to

climb that mountain there. I want to find herbs to cure your people. Come with me! I can't run away with this *kolodka* on my leg. And tomorrow I'll make you a bow and arrows."

So he persuaded the lad, and they went together. The mountain did not seem far, but it was difficult going with the *kolodka;* he went on and on, and it taxed his utmost strength. When he got to the summit, Zhilin sat down to take a good look at the place. To the south, behind the outhouse, was a gully; a herd of horses was roaming along there, and another village was visible as a tiny point. Beyond this village was another and still steeper mountain, and behind this mountain yet another. Between the mountains was the blue outline of a wood, and there could be seen other mountains, rising higher and higher. And higher than all, as white as sugar, stood yet other mountains covered with snow. And one snowy mountain with a cap on stood out higher than all the rest. On the east and on the west were similar mountains; here and there smoking hamlets could be seen in the ravines. "Well," thought Zhilin, "all that is their part of the country." Then he began looking toward the Russian side: at his feet were the stream, his own village, and little gardens all around. By the stream, like so many little puppets, the women were sitting and rinsing clothes. Behind the village, somewhat lower down, was a moun-

tain with two other mountains in between, and after that came woods; and between the two mountains, looking blue in the distance, was a level space, and far, far away in this level space some smoke was rising. Zhilin tried to remember where the sun used to rise and where it used to set when he lived at home in the fortress. And then he saw that "our" fortress must needs be on that very plain. Thither, then, between the two mountains, his flight must lie.

The sun was beginning to set. The snow-covered mountains turned from white to rosy red; the black mountains grew darker; the mist began to ascend from the gullies, and that very valley in which the Russian fortress needs must be glowed like a fire in the distant West. Zhilin looked steadily in that direction; something was dimly visible in the valley, like smoke coming from a tube. And he thought to himself that must be the Russian fortress itself.

It was getting late. The call of the priest to prayers could be heard from where they were. The flocks were being driven homeward; the cows were lowing. The little lad kept on saying, "Let's be going!" But Zhilin did not want to go.

At last, however, they turned homeward. "Well," thought Zhilin, "at any rate I know the place now, and must make a bolt for it." He would have liked to escape that very night.

The nights just then were dark; the moon was on the wane. Unfortunately, the Tatars returned that very evening. They used to come in driving captured cattle before them in a merry mood; but on this occasion they drove in nothing at all, and brought along with them on his saddle a slain Tatar, the brother of the red-bearded Tatar. They arrived very wrathful, and gathered together to bury their comrade. Zhilin also came out to see what was going on. They wrapped the corpse in a piece of cloth without a coffin; then they placed it on the grass in the middle of the village under a plane-tree. The priest arrived, and they all squatted down together on their heels in front of the corpse.

The priest was in front, behind him sat the three village elders in their turbans, and in a row with and behind them some more Tatars. There they sat with dejected eyes and in silence. The silence lasted for a long time, and then the priest raised his head and spoke:

"Allah!" he said. It was the only word he spoke. And once more they all cast down their eyes, and were silent for a long time. They sat there without stirring. Again the priest raised his voice:

"Allah!"

"Allah!" they all repeated, and were again silent. The dead man was lying on the grass, he moved not, and they all sat round him like

dead men. Not one of them stirred. The only thing to be heard was the quivering of the tiny leaves of the plane-tree in the light breeze. Then the priest recited a prayer, and they all stood up, raised the dead man, and carried him away. They carried him to the grave. The grave was not simply dug out, but burrowed underneath the ground like a cellar. They lifted the dead man beneath the shoulders and under the legs, bent him a little inward, and slowly let him go, thrusting him in under the earth in a sitting position, and pulling his arms straight down close to his body.

The Nogai Tatars then brought green rushes, and filled up the hole therewith, strewed it with fresh earth, made it level, and placed an upright stone at the head of the dead man. Then they stamped down the earth, again sat down round the grave, and were silent for a long time.

"Allah! Allah! Allah!" And they sighed deeply and stood up.

The red-bearded man distributed money among the elders, then he rose, took up his short whip, struck his forehead three times, and went home.

In the morning Zhilin saw them leading a fine mare out of the village with three Tatars following behind. When they got right out of the village, the red-bearded Tatar took off his tunic, tucked up his sleeves—what big, brawny arms he had!—drew forth his knife, and sharpened

it on a piece of sandstone. The Tatars then drew forward the mare's head, and the red-bearded man came forward and cut her throat, flung the mare to the ground, and began to flay her, separating the hide from the flesh with his huge hands. Then the women and the girls came up and began to wash the entrails and the inside. After that they cut up the mare, and dragged the meat into the hut. And the whole village came together at the house of the red-bearded man to commemorate the deceased.

Three days they ate of the mare, drank *buza,* and commemorated the death of the victim.

All the Tatars were at home now, but on the fourth day Zhilin, after dinner, beheld them assembling to go somewhere. They brought their horses, made ready, and went off, ten men in all, and the red-bearded man went too. Only Abdul remained at home. There was a new moon just then, and the nights were still pretty dark.

"Now's the time," thought Zhilin; "now we must make a bolt for it." He spoke to Kostuilin about it, but Kostuilin was afraid.

"How can we run away? We don't know the road," said he.

"I know the road."

"But we shall never be able to get there in the night."

"Suppose we don't, surely we can pass the

night in the forest? And look! I've collected some hearth-cakes. Why do you want to stick here? It's easy enough to send for money, but you see they haven't collected it. And besides, the Tatars are angry now because the Russians have killed one of their people. They have been talking together about killing us too."

Kostuilin thought and thought for a long time.

"Very well, let us go," said he at last.

V

Zhilin crept into his hole, and dug still deeper in order that Kostuilin also might be able to creep through it; then they sat down and waited till all was quiet in the place.

As soon as all the people in the village were quiet, Zhilin crept under the wall and forced his way through. Then he whispered to Kostuilin:

"You creep through too!" And as he did so he loosed a stone, which made a great noise. Zhilin's master, however, had placed a guard at the door—a piebald dog, a vicious, a very vicious beast. His name was Ulyashin. But Zhilin had made it his business regularly to feed the animal for some time. As soon as Ulyashin heard them he began to bark and rushed up, and after him all the other dogs. But Zhilin merely whistled to him, and threw him a bit of hearth-cake.

Then Ulyashin recognized him, wagged his tail, and ceased to bark.

But Zhilin's master had heard, and he now began to shout from out of the hut:

"Hold him! Hold him, Ulyashin!"

Zhilin, however, was busy scratching Ulyashin behind the ears, and the dog was silent, rubbed himself against Zhilin's legs, and wagged his tail.

They sat down behind a corner. All grew quiet again. All that could be heard were the sheep shuffling in their fold, and the water below bubbling over the stones. It was dark. The stars stood high in the heavens, the young red moon stood over the mountain with her horns pointed upward. In the valley gleamed a milk-white mist.

Zhilin arose and said to his comrade:

"Now, my brother, let's be off!"

Something stirred just as they were starting. They stopped to listen. The priest was chanting on the roof:

"Allah! Bismillah! Ilrakhman!" This signifies: "Come, people, to the mosque!"

They sat down again, squeezing themselves against the wall. Long they sat there, waiting till the people should have gone by. Again all was silent.

"Now, then, in God's name!"

They crossed themselves and set out. They

went through the courtyard, down the steep slope to the stream, crossed the stream, and went along the gully. The mist was thick and stood low, and over their heads the stars were dimly, tinily visible. Zhilin calculated by the stars which way he ought to take. It was fresh in the mist and easy going, but their boots were in the way and made them stumble. Zhilin took his off, threw them away, and went along barefooted. He kept leaping from rock to rock, looking at the stars. Kostuilin began to lag behind.

"Go more slowly!" said he. "These cursed boots of mine! But all boots hinder one so!"

"Take them off, then! You'll find it easier going."

Kostuilin also then went barefooted—and found it still worse. He was bruising his feet continually on the stones, and kept lagging behind more than ever.

"Lift up your feet more! Look alive!" said Zhilin. "If they overtake us they'll kill us, and that will be worst of all."

Kostuilin said nothing. He came on puffing and blowing. For a long time they went down hill. They listened, and heard dogs barking to their right. Zhilin stopped, looking about him. He went to the mountain-side and felt it with his hands.

"Oh!" said he, "we have made a mistake; we turned to the right. Here is another village.

I could see it from the mountain-top. We must go back—to the left—up the mountain. There is sure to be a road there."

"Just wait a little," said Kostuilin; "do give me time to breathe a bit; my feet are all bloody."

"Look alive, my brother! Spring a little more lightly—that's the whole trick!"

And Zhilin ran back to the left toward the mountain, and into the wood. Kostuilin lagged behind, groaning and gasping.

Zhilin kept urging him to be quicker, but went on himself without stopping.

They ascended the mountain. Yes—there, right enough, was the wood. They entered the wood, and all that was left of their clothing was quickly torn to bits. Then they hit upon a path in the wood, and went steadily on.

Stop! The sound of hoofs resounded on the road. They halted and listened. There was stamping as of a horse, and then it ceased. They moved on again; the stamping recommenced. They stopped still, and the stamping stopped. Zhilin crept forward, and looked along the road in the light: something was standing there. It was a horse, and yet not a horse, and on the horse was something odd, not resembling a man. It snorted—they listened. What monster could it be? Zhilin whistled very softly. It scurried off the path into the forest, and in the forest there

was a crashing sound. It flew like a tempest, breaking down the branches in its path.

Kostuilin almost fell to the ground in his terror. But Zhilin laughed and said:

"That was a stag. Hark how he smashes the wood with his horns. We are afraid of him, and he is afraid of us."

They went along farther. Morning was now close at hand. Where they were going, however, they knew not. It seemed to Zhilin as if the Tatars had brought him along by that selfsame path. As far as he could make it out, they had still some six or seven miles to traverse. But there were no certain landmarks, and it was night, so that there was no distinguishing anything. Presently they came out upon a little plain, and Kostuilin sat down and said:

"You may do as you like, but I shall never get there. My legs won't do it."

Zhilin tried to persuade him.

"No," said he, "I sha'n't go any farther. I can't, I tell you."

Zhilin then grew angry. He spat on one side, and bullied his comrade.

"Then I'll go on alone," said he. "Good-bye!"

Then Kostuilin leaped to his feet and went on. They now went on for four miles. The mist in the forest grew still thicker; they could see nothing in front of them; the stars were barely visible.

At last they heard something like the trampling of a horse in front of them. They could hear the hoofs clattering against the stones. Zhilin lay down on his stomach, and began to listen with his ear to the ground.

"Yes," said he, "it is as I thought. A horseman is coming toward us."

They quitted the road in haste, sat among the bushes, and waited. Zhilin presently crept forward toward the road, and saw a mounted Tatar coming along, driving a cow before him and muttering to himself. After he had gone, Zhilin turned to Kostuilin, saying:

"He's gone by, thank God! Get up, and we'll go on!"

Kostuilin tried to get up, but fell down again. He was a heavy, puffy fellow, and began to sweat profusely. The cold mist of the forest, too, had given him a chill; his feet were lacerated, and he went all to pieces. When Zhilin raised him to his feet with an effort, he cried out:

"Oh it hurts!"

Zhilin almost had a fit.

"What are you howling for! The Tatars are quite close to us—don't you hear?" But he thought to himself: "He really is almost done for; what am I to do with him? One can't leave a comrade in the lurch; it wouldn't be right."

"Well," said he, "get up on my back. I'll carry you, if you really can't walk yourself."

So he put Kostuilin on his shoulders, gripped him under the knees, took the road again, and staggered onward.

"Only, my good fellow," said he, "don't grip me round the throat, but lay hold of my shoulders."

It was a heavy load for Zhilin. His feet also were all bloody, and he was tired to death. He felt crushed, tried to get into an easier position, hitched his shoulder so as to get Kostuilin to sit higher—and flung him into the road.

It was quite plain that the Tatar had heard Kostuilin yell, for as Zhilin listened he could hear some one coming back while uttering a peculiar cry. Zhilin threw himself into the bushes. The Tatar seized his musket, fired it, hit nothing, whined in Tatar fashion, and galloped down the road again.

"Well, my brother, he has gone, anyway," said Zhilin; "but the dog will at once collect all the Tatars he can find, and pursue us. If we don't do our three miles, we're done for." But he thought to himself, "What devil put it into my head to take this blockhead with me! Had I been alone, I should have got off long ago."

"You go on alone," said Kostuilin. "Why should you come to grief all through me?"

"No, I will not go alone. It is wrong to desert a comrade."

So he took him on his shoulders again, and

went on. In this way he covered a mile. The forest stretched right on, and there was no sign of an outlet. The mist was beginning to disperse; little clouds—or so they seemed—fared along; the stars were no longer visible. Zhilin was puzzled.

A spring, set among rocks, crossed the road. Here Zhilin stopped and set down Kostuilin.

"Let's have a rest," said he, "to give me breathing-time. I want a drink, too, and we'll have some hearth-cakes. It can't be much farther now."

No sooner had he drunk his fill, however, than he heard the trampling of hoofs behind them. Once more they crept into the bushes on the right, beneath the steep cliff, and lay at full length.

Soon they heard the voices of the Tatars, who stopped at the very spot where they had turned off from the road. They talked a good deal among themselves, after which they put the dogs they had brought with them upon the scent. Zhilin and his comrade listened. There was a crashing of branches in the thicket, and straight toward them came a strange dog. When he saw them he stood still and began barking.

Then the Tatars also crept through the bushes. They were strange Tatars whom they had not seen before. The Tatars seized them, bound them, put them on horseback, and took them off.

They went along for about three miles, and then they met Zhilin's master, Abdul, and two other Tatars. These said something to the strange Tatars, transferred the captives to their own horses, and brought them back to the village.

Abdul laughed no longer, and said not a single word to them.

They brought them into the village at break of day, and set them down in the public street. The children came running up, beat them with stones and whips, and jeered at them.

The Tatars gathered together in a circle, soon being joined by the elder from the mountainside. They began talking, from which Zhilin understood that they were trying them, and debating what was to be done with them. Some said they should be sent farther away into the mountains, but the elder said that they ought to be killed. Abdul, however, objected to this. "I have paid money for them," said he, "and I am going to get a ransom for them."

"They'll never pay anything at all," replied the old man, "but will only do harm. It's a sin to feed Russians. Kill them, and have done with it!"

After they had separated, Zhilin's master came to him and began to talk to him.

"If they don't send me your ransom in a fortnight," said he, "I'll whip you to death. If you try to run away a second time, I'll kill you like

dogs. Write a letter, and mind you write a good one!"

Paper was brought, and they wrote the letter. Then the *kolodki* were fastened to them again, and they were taken to the mosque. Here there was a hole in the earth five ells long, and into this hole they were cast.

VI

Their life was now hard indeed. Their *kolodki* were never taken off; nor were they ever allowed a breath of fresh air. The Tatars flung them bits of uncooked dough as if they were dogs, filling a pitcher of water for them from time to time.

The heat of the hole was stifling, and it was damp and stinking. Kostuilin became downright ill. His limbs swelled and twitched all over, and he groaned continually except when he was asleep. Zhilin also was dejected; he saw they were in evil case. But how to get out of it he had no idea.

He would have begun mining again, but there was nowhere to hide the earth, and then, too, his master had threatened to kill him.

One day he was squatting in the hole thinking of life and liberty, feeling very miserable. Suddenly, right upon his knees fell a hearth-cake, and then another, followed by quite a shower of wild cherries. He looked up, and there was

Dina. She gazed at him, laughed a little, and ran away, "Now I wonder if Dina would help us," thought Zhilin.

He cleaned a little corner of the hole, dug out a bit of clay, and made a lot of puppets out of it. He made men and women, horses and dogs, and thought to himself, "When Dina comes, I'll throw them out to her."

But on the next day there was no Dina, though Zhilin heard the trampling of horses and the noise of people passing to and fro, and could hear that the Tatars had assembled at the mosque and were disputing and shouting and consulting about the Russians. He also heard the voice of the old man of the mountain. He could not make out very well what was going on, but he guessed that the Russians were drawing near and that the Tatars were afraid they might come to the village and find out what was being done with the prisoners.

After debating together, the Tatars dispersed. Suddenly Zhilin heard a slight noise above his head. He looked up. There was Dina squatting on her haunches, with her knees hunched up higher than her head; she was leaning forward, her necklaces were visible, and were swinging to and fro right over the hole. Her little eyes gleamed like tiny stars. She drew out of her sleeve two cheese-cakes, which she threw to him.

Zhilin took them, saying, "Why have you been

so long gone? I have been making playthings for you. Look!" And he began to fling them to her one by one.

But she shook her head, and would not look at them. "I don't want 'em," she said. She sat silent for a while, and then she went on, "Ivan, they want to kill thee," drawing her hand across her throat.

"Who wants to kill me?"

"Father. The elders have bidden him do it. But I'm sorry for thee."

"If you are sorry for me," said Zhilin, "bring me a long pole."

She shook her head to signify that it was impossible. He put his hands together beseechingly.

"Dina, I pray thee do it! Dear little Dina, bring it to me!"

"Impossible," said she; "they are all at home, you see!" And off she ran.

So Zhilin sat there all the evening, thinking, "What will come of it, I wonder?" He kept looking up all the time. The stars were visible, but the moon had not yet risen. The priest's shrill cry was heard—and then all was silent. Zhilin began to grow drowsy. "Plainly, the girl is afraid," he reflected.

Suddenly a piece of clay plumped down on his head. He looked up. A long pole was thrust into a corner of the hole. It waggled about, descended gradually, and began to work its way into the

hole. Zhilin was delighted. He caught hold of it and drew it in. It was a good, strong pole. He had noticed this pole some time before on the roof of his master's home.

He looked up again. The stars were shining high in the heavens, and right above the hole the eyes of Dina shone as brightly as the eyes of a cat in the darkness. She leaned forward over the mouth of the hole and whispered:

"Ivan! Ivan!" and she kept on making signs and drawing her hands repeatedly over her face by way of saying, "Hush! Be quiet!"

"What is it?" asked Zhilin.

"They have all gone; there are only two at home."

"Well, Kostuilin, let us go," said Zhilin. "We will try for the last time. I'll help you to get out of it."

But Kostuilin would not even hear of it.

"No," said he, "it's quite plain that I can't manage it. I have not the strength to go quickly, whichever way we go."

'Good-bye, then! And think no ill of me for leaving you!" And he embraced Kostuilin.

Then he seized the pole, bade Dina hold it firm, and began to creep up it. Once or twice he fell down, for the *kolodka* hampered him. Kostuilin then supported him, and he worked his

way some distance up. Dina dragged away at his shirt with her little hands with all her might, laughing all the time, but it was no good.

Thereupon Zhilin laid hold of the pole with both hands.

"Pull it, Dina!" he cried. "Seize hold of it well, and you'll see it will almost come to you of its own accord!"

So she pulled away at the pole, with the result that presently Zhilin found himself up at the mountain-side. He crept down the steep declivity seized a sharp stone, and tried hard to force the lock of the *kolodka*. But the lock was a strong one; he was unable to break it, though he was not unskilful. Then he heard someone running down the mountain-side and leaping lightly along. "That must be Dina again," thought Zhilin. And Dina it was. Up she came running, seized a large stone, and said:

"Give it me!"

She squatted down on her little knees, and began to try her hand at it. But her little arms, as thin as twigs, had no strength in them; she threw away the stone, and burst into tears. Then Zhilin himself had another try at the lock, while Dina sat down beside him, leaning against his shoulder. Zhilin glanced round, and saw on the left side of the mountain a burning red reflection: the moon was rising. "Well," thought he,

"before the moon rises I must make my way through the gully and get to the wood." He rose and threw away the stone. *Kolodka* or no, go he must.

"Good-bye, little Dina," said he; "I shall always remember thee."

Dina clutched at him, and began to fumble about his sleeves to see if she could find a place wherein to stuff some pancakes. He took the pancakes.

"Thanks, my wise little woman," said he. "Who will make dolls for thee when I am gone, I wonder?" And he stroked her head.

How bitterly Dina wept. Finally, she covered her face with her hands and ran away up the mountain like a wild kid. The clink of the coins in the long tresses of hair hanging down her back was audible in the darkness.

Zhilin crossed himself, seized the lock of the *kolodka* so as not to stumble as he went, and hobbled along the road, gazing constantly at the reflection of light where the moon was rising. He knew the road. He had to go straight on for about eight miles. If only he could get to the forest before the moon had quite risen! He crossed the stream; the light behind the mountain was growing brighter. He passed through the gully. On he went, glancing upward from time to time. Still the moon was not visible. The burning reflection was increasing, and everything

on one side of the gully was growing brighter and brighter. A shadow was creeping along the mountain, coming nearer and nearer to him.

Zhilin went on and on, the shadow still continuing to advance. He hastened on, and the moon was working her way out even more quickly than he had anticipated; to the right the tops of the trees were already lighted up. He was now close to the forest, when the moon burst forth from behind the mountain. Everything was as light and bright as if it were day. Every little leaf on every little tree was visible. It was quite quiet on the illumined mountain-sides, as if everything had died out of existence. The only thing to be heard was the gurgling of the stream below.

He reached the forest without anything happening. Zhilin chose the darkest spot he could find in the forest, there sitting down to rest.

After recovering his breath, he ate a hearth-cake. Then he took a stone, and again set about battering the *kolodka*. He battered it with all the strength of his arm, but could not break it. He arose, and went along the road. After going for a mile, he became thoroughly exhausted, when his legs tottered beneath him. Ten steps more he took, and then he stopped short.

"It's no use," said he; "all I can do is to drag myself on as long as I have the strength to do so. If once I sit down, I shall not get up again.

I can never get to the fortress to-day, but as soon as it is dawn I will lie up in the forest, and at night I'll go on again."

All night he went onward. The only people he met were two mounted Tatars, and as he saw them at a distance he was able to hide away from them behind a tree.

The moon had already begun to wane, the dew was falling, it was close upon dawn, and still Zhilin had not got to the end of the forest. "Well," thought he, "just thirty steps more, and then I'll turn into the forest and sit down." He took the thirty steps, when he saw that the forest was coming to an end. He went out to the very fringe of it. There, quite bright before him, as if on the palm of his hands, lay the plain and the fortress, and to the left, quite close under the mountain-side, camp-fires were burning and smoking, and people were standing round the smouldering logs.

He gazed fixedly, and saw Cossacks—soldiers —and glistening arms.

Zhilin, full of joy, rallied his last remaining strength and prepared to descend the mountain-side.

"God grant," thought he, "that a mounted Tatar may not see me in the open plain. Although I'm pretty near now, I'm not there yet."

And the thought was no sooner in his head, when behold! on a little mound stood three Ta-

tars, about two furlongs off. They saw him—and dashed after him. His heart absolutely died away within him. Then he waved his arms, and shouted with all the breath he had in his body:

"My brothers! My brothers! Save me!"

Our fellows heard him, and some mounted Cossacks galloped forward. They made for him in an oblique direction to cut off the Tatars.

The Cossacks were far off; the Tatars were near. But now Zhilin rallied all his strength, seized his *kolodka*, and ran toward the Cossacks, no longer remembering who he was, but crossing himself and crying continually:

"Brothers! Brothers! Brothers!"

The Cossacks were about fifteen in number.

The Tatars grew frightened. Instead of coming on, they reined in their horses. And Zhilin ran right into the Cossacks.

The Cossacks surrounded him, and asked him who he was and whence he came. But Zhilin no longer remembered who he was, and burst out crying, babbling all the time:

"Brothers! Brothers!"

The regular soldiers next came running out, and crowded round Zhilin. One of them offered him bread, another broth, a third covered him with a mantle, a fourth broke up the *kolodka.*

The officers presently recognized him, and conducted him to the fortress. The soldiers were delighted, and his comrades gathered round him.

Zhilin told them all that had happened to him, and said:

"You see, I was going home to be married. But no; that is evidently not to be my fate!"

And so he continued to serve in the Caucasus.

As for Kostuilin, they only ransomed him three months later for five thousand roubles. They brought him in barely alive.

LEO TOLSTOY.

THE END